

# The Way They Are

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Summary: Hiccup and the gang have been asked by Dumbledore to help out with the first task. Its not what they want to do, but Hiccup knows the alternative is worse. Hiccup meets the young champions, and is forced to specifically train one dragon... Can he do it though?

## 1. Chapter 1

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Hiccup and his fellow Viking friends had been asked by a very important man to help out with their competition. Unfortunately for Hiccup, he wasn't allowed to go alone. His father, Stoic, refused to allow a bunch of fifteen year olds to head to a school for wizards without supervision. Because of this, Gobber, the resident blacksmith, was going to accompany them. He was Stoic's best friend and the teacher of young. Well, used to be. Now Hiccup was.

The Vikings were headed towards Hogwarts, a magical school for witches and wizards. They'd never heard of wizards or Hogwarts until they'd been approached by Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster himself, and asked to help out with their Triwizard Tournament. Hiccup had refused his proposal but Dumbledore had been...persuasive. Hiccup wasn't very proud of giving in. He didn't like Dumbledore; none of the Vikings did. But they were allowed to bring their dragons and that was something Hiccup wouldn't let Dumbledore talk him out of. The man wanted the teens, he would have to deal with the dragons. They were a package deal.

Hiccup and Toothless were almost ready to leave. The headmaster had explained that he had charmed one of their ships to take the Vikings straight towards the castle when they were ready. Hiccup was glad that Toothless was going. They were best friends, and Hiccup wouldn't be able to handle a bunch of wizards and a man he didn't trust without his dragon. The Night Fury relied heavily on Hiccup too, but

only to fly. He adored Hiccup and would protect the boy with his life.

Stoic walked out of his house to find Hiccup standing at the door with his dragon. The older man walked over to his son and placed his large hand on Hiccup's thin shoulder. Hiccup jumped and looked up, his heart slowing as he saw who it was. His father always did have a way of scaring him.

"Good luck, son." Stoic said, his thick accent making his words lower and harsher than Hiccup knew he intended them to be. "I'm sorry that I can't go with you."

Hiccup nodded. He followed Stoic's eyes towards Gobber, who was singing and plucking a tooth out of a Zippleback mouth. He snickered before turning back to his father. Stoic was the chief of the tribe, yet he never acted like he was above anyone. He was just another Viking. Hiccup didn't think that he could ever be like his father but there was still time to learn. Stoic wasn't going anywhere.

"I know, your chief-ing duties prevent you from leaving the village for too long. I know, dad," Hiccup rolled his eyes. He'd listened to his father's worries and constant apologies ever since Dumbledore's visit. But that was Stoic. And Stoic was protective. After all, his only son was a clumsy twig that rode dragons all day. Not to mention the whole one legged thing.

Stoic nodded and hugged his only son. "You come back safely. And show those wizards what happens when they mess with Vikings," he smirked. Hiccup rolled his eyes and hugged his father back.

Once Stoic let go of him, Hiccup smiled and turned to face his dragon. Toothless grumbled and gestured his scaly head towards the ship. Hiccup noticed that the others were already boarding and packing their things in the chests. Hiccup nodded at Toothless, who instantly dashed towards the ship.

Hiccup followed behind the Night Fury, sending one last wave towards Stoic before jumping off the pier and onto the ship. Gobber followed quickly and the ship instantly set sail. Hiccup swayed and almost lost his balance before Toothless appeared and supported the boy.

The rest of the group were sitting on crates, making sure that their dragons didn't start fights and accidentally burn the ship down. While Toothless was his best friend, the group accompanying him on the journey were close to him as well. There was Astrid, who was a strong girl with a lethal attitude. Her dragon was a deadly Deadly Nadder named Stormfly; a tall girl with blue and purple scales. She could shoot spines from her tail at will and was extremely loyal, despite not being the kindest of creatures.

Snotlout was Hiccup's cousin, and had a very good opinion of himself. Hiccup didn't like him very much but he was still his friend. Snotlout's dragon was a Monstrous Nightmare called Hookfang. A long and fierce dragon which could light his body on fire whenever he felt necessary.

The twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, were extremely stupid. Hiccup found them annoying, with their insatiable need to destroy things. Their

dragon, a Hideous Zippleback, suited them perfectly with Ruffnut's head, Barf, shooting out the gas, and Tuffnut's head, Belch, lighting it with a spark.

The last was Fishlegs. He was the smart one. The one who read the book of dragons over ten times and knew everything about all the dragons. Except for the Night Fury but that was only because there wasn't anything in the Book of Dragons about them. His Gronkle, Meatlug, was very sensitive just like his owner. Hiccup found their relationship slightly odd but he never said anything.

Hiccup settled down on the floor of the boat and lent up against Toothless. The dragon curled against the edge of the boat and lay his head near Hiccup's. The two closed their eyes and started to drift off. They knew it would take some time to get to the school and they had woken up early to get a last fly in before leaving so it wasn't long until the pair were fast asleep.

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><p>Harry couldn't believe what was happening. Not only was the Triwizard Tournament taking place this year, it was being held at Hogwarts! That meant he would have a shot at entering. Then again, there were hundreds of other wizards who would also be entering which would make his chances slimmer. Still, Harry thought it wouldn't hurt to give it a go.</p>

Harry was sitting at the breakfast table when the news came; the students from the other schools were here. The Durmstrung boys and the Beauxbaton girls.

The Great Hall was alive with excitement at the arrival of the other students. Harry was excited too, but his nerves were also prominent. What sorts of things had they heard about him? Being the 'famous Harry Potter' that he was. Did that mean that they wouldn't like him? Maybe they didn't even know who he was and Harry was just overreacting. He pushed his questions to the back of his mind and focused on his friends.

Hermione and Ron were chatting excitedly next to him. They hadn't noticed Harry's nerves and they shouldn't have had to. Harry should have been calm. There wasn't anything to be nervous about. Filch had only just come to notify Dumbledore of the arrivals. They hadn't even come through the doors yet.

Just as the thought passed through Harry's head, the doors of the Great Hall opened and the French girls from Beauxbatons Academy of Magic walked through. Well, they danced and did some acrobatics through the long lines of tables towards the front where they seated themselves at the Ravenclaw table.

As soon as the Beauxbatons were through, the Durmstrang boys entered. They were stronger than the Beauxbatons girls. Fiercer. Harry watched their movements with awe. Flame throwing and all. It was incredibly impressive. He noticed Viktor Krum, one of the best seekers in the Quidditch world, and was star struck for a moment. Viktor Krum. At Hogwarts. Yeah, he didn't need to worry about people looking at him now.

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><p>Hiccup opened his eyes to someone poking him and groaned in response. He heard a low growl and opened his eyes groggily. He looked up to see Toothless laying a protective wing around Hiccup and Astrid poking Hiccup with a stick. She wouldn't poke him with her hand with Toothless around. She didn't have a death wish.</p>

Toothless lifted his wing and nudged Hiccup gently. Hiccup smiled and rubbed behind the dragons ears. He grumbled and made a few sounds of agreement. Hiccup didn't need to speak dragon to know that his own was happy with what he was doing.

Hiccup stood up and stretched, almost losing his balance as the water rocked the boat slightly. Toothless caught the Viking's fall and Hiccup thanked him. Toothless shook it off and approached Astrid angrily. She jumped away and behind Stormfly. Toothless looked as though he would smirk if he could, and looked over the side of the boat.

Toothless pulled back instantly and made a sound of disapproval. Hiccup quickly looked around his surroundings. They had arrived, he knew that much. But how were they going to get ashore? They were sitting in the middle of a lake with the school â€“ was that what that large castle like structure was? â€“ on one side and a forest on the other. Hiccup contemplated flying the dragons to land before remembering Dumbledore's words. So, no dragons.

Astrid walked over to Hiccup. She would be safer now that Hiccup could hold off Toothless; they didn't get along too well but Hiccup was happy to be the peacekeeper when he needed to be. Sometimes Astrid needed to put in her place. Well, Hiccup thought she did.

"So, how are we getting ashore?" Astrid asked, voicing Hiccup's previous thoughts.

Hiccup looked at the sails. "Well, the Viking way," he said matter-of-factly.

Gobber instantly raised his false hand and toasted to it. Hiccup rolled his eyes and the other teens snickered. Snotlout made a soft comment which Hiccup didn't quite catch. Without a second to lose, Gobber instructed the teens to get to work. Hiccup wobbled about on the boat and finally Gobber refused Hiccup's help. There wasn't much point if he was just going to fall over every second. Hiccup sat on the side and held Toothless's head in his hands.

He watched as the boat rocked closer to shore when the wind caught the sails. The other dragons were perched on the sides of the boat and made croaking sounds as they approached the stone building. Hiccup was shocked by how large the castle was. It was more than three times their Great Hall which was the largest building the Viking's had.

Hiccup lurched with the boat as it came to a stop at the docks. Toothless made a grumbling sound which resembled a laugh. Hiccup glared playfully at the dragon and stood back up. Gobber turned to the group before they left the boat.

"As you are aware, we are here because these...wizards...asked us to. They have asked for us to not let our dragons loose," Gobber announced.

Hiccup glanced at Toothless warily. Would he be able to hide the dragon? Toothless went nearly everywhere with him. It was hard to separate them for more than three minutes.

Gobber noticed Hiccup's worried glance and sighed. "For now, at least. After the feast tonight, we shall ask Dumbledore what to do with the dragons. They can't all stay on a wooden boat in the ocean. Especially not Toothless."

Hiccup breathed a sigh of relief at the words. Toothless grumbled unhappily. He knew that he would have to stay there for the time being. Hiccup leant down and gave the dragon a scratch behind the ears and under his chin. "You stay here, bud. These wizardsâ€|I don't know what they would do to you if they found out. I can't lose you," he murmured.

Toothless licked Hiccup's face and Hiccup laughed and stood up. "Toothless! You know that doesn't wash out...", he said. Toothless gurgled and made some sounds to which Hiccup knew were laughing. The two finally separated and Hiccup heard the pining that came from his dragon. He turned back and waved sadly. At least, Toothless would be safe on the boat.

Hiccup joined his fellow Vikings and they headed towards the school. Hiccup glanced back constantly to make sure that the dragon was still on the boat. With the approaching darkness, it became increasingly difficult to see the near black dragon but he could see the silhouette of him standing patiently for Hiccup to return.

The group entered the Great Hall and were surprised at what they walked into. Not only was everyone looking at them, it seemed as though they had been waiting for a while. There were four long tables filled with various students. Hiccup stood behind Astrid and Fishlegs. Being the centre of attention wasn't something he enjoyed. He almost wished he'd covered his lost leg.

Gobber moved forward. Hiccup didn't know how the blacksmith knew what to do. Did Dumbledore speak to him personally? It wasn't likely; he had barely spoken to Hiccup outside of a few harsh words. Hiccup still hated him for them.

The people on the tables were dead quiet and Hiccup paled as they followed behind Gobber. They were getting dangerously close to the long table at the front. The one where Dumbledore sat. Hiccup found his courage resurfacing and glared at the headmaster. He would not get away with what he did to get them here.

Astrid placed a hand on Hiccup's shoulder and he looked at her. She smiled sadly. He'd told her what Dumbledore had threatened to do to get them here. She wasn't impressed either. None of the group had been. Not even Gobber, and he didn't even have his own dragon.

The group stopped at the end of the long vertical tables and in front of the horizontal one. The headmaster stood and walked towards the Vikings. He looked over their heads and towards the students. Upon further inspection, Hiccup noticed that there were two other groups

amongst them that were made visible because of the different uniforms. The girls were wearing light blue and the boys wearing black and red.

Dumbledore stepped forward and nodded his head towards Gobber. Gobber himself bowed. But Hiccup could see that it was forced. The niceties were running thin between the groups of Vikings and the headmaster. No one threatened the lives of the dragons and gets away with it.

"Welcome, welcome everyone. This year will surely be the strangest of years for many of you. We have the Triwizard Tournament, as many of you already know. And here to assist in the preparation, are these young Vikings from Berk," Dumbledore announced.

Hiccup groaned and looked at Astrid. The way he said it was as though they had wanted to go. But that wasn't the case. The rest of the Viking teens showed their distaste for the older man's words too, but the students of the school clapped and cheered, welcoming the group to their school.

Dumbledore looked between Gobber and Hiccup, as though deciding which one to talk to. Finally, he said to both of them, "One of you must sit up at the teachers table. I know that young Hiccup here is the leader, but it would be preferable for Gobber here."

Hiccup laughed and it wasn't a pleasant sound. Dumbledore hardly noticed it. Hiccup shoved Gobber forward. "You go. We're going to sit down. Before something happens" he said lowly. Gobber nodded and stepped up and following Dumbledore to his seat at the head table.

Hiccup's group found a seat at the table towards the centre left. It was a gold and red table. There was a small section completely cleared, which they quickly occupied. The people around them shuffled down once the Vikings were seated, as though they had been cramped and weren't anymore.

Dumbledore announced the feast could now begin and the students dove into their foods hungrily. Hiccup and his friends exchanged glances from across the table. Hiccup sat next to Astrid, the twins opposite them, with Fishlegs next to Astrid and Snotlout on the other side. There were students seated on either side of them. Hiccup almost felt caged.

The Vikings served themselves some familiar looking foods and started to eat. Hiccup stuffed some cooked fish into his pockets for Toothless. He knew his dragon would love the fish. Hiccup's friends mostly ate bread and meat, but Hiccup preferred the fish.

The students around the Vikings didn't pay much attention to them until after the meal. One person next to Hiccup turned around and gave Hiccup a glance. He had untidy black hair, circular glasses and a lightning shaped scar on his forehead. It looked strange but Hiccup knew that it was something that this boy wasn't ashamed of. Just as Hiccup wasn't ashamed of his metal leg.

"Hello, I'm Harry," the boy introduced himself, holding out his hand.

Hiccup took it and announced his own name. "Hiccup."

People around Hiccup snickered. Hiccup rolled his eyes. Of course. Hiccup was the name given to the smallest of the litter. Everyone knew that. Hiccup was the third Viking with the name but the first in a long line of chiefs. He didn't consider his name a dishonour of any sort, but Hiccup knew his dad hadn't thought he was anything special. That is, until he trained a Night Fury.

Harry nodded and gestured towards his friends. Among them was a bushy haired girl with the same robes as Harry, scarlet and gold. Another was a red headed, short boy who looked a little clumsy. Hiccup reminded himself that he looked a bit puny, too. Without the red hair and freckles, though.

"This is Hermione and Ron," he gestured first to the girl and then to the boy. Hiccup and his friends waved to them. Harry waited for Hiccup to introduce his own friends.

"This is Astrid," Hiccup started. Astrid waved her hand and almost hit Hiccup in the head. She laughed and swatted his shoulder when he sent her a glare. "Fishlegs." He pointed to the larger boy at the end of their group. Fishlegs waved and Astrid scooted closer to Hiccup, trying to get away from Fishlegs's flailing hand. Hiccup rolled his eyes. "The twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut." The twins were fighting over something, and Hiccup heard a reference to their dragon. He rolled his eyes once more and looked at Snotlout. "And that's Snotlout. He's not one to mess with," Hiccup added. The Viking glared playfully at Hiccup and threw some chicken at him. Hiccup dodged and it landed on the floor.

Harry laughed and nodded. "Yeah, well. We have a whole house which you need to avoid," he said. Hiccup gave him a confused look. Harry pointed to the table next to them against the wall as he said, "That's Slytherin. We avoid them. Gryffindor â€“ that's us â€“ and Slytherin don't get along very well."

Hiccup wondered what kind of feud that these people had. Surely it wasn't anything like what the situation was with the Outcasts and the people of Berk. Hiccup doubted anything could be like that.

As the Vikings began a conversation with Harry and his friends, Hiccup couldn't help but thinking about his best friend. What was Toothless doing right now? His mind kept drifting to the worst scenario. He knew Toothless would do the right thing and stay inside the boat. He was a smart dragon and he'd been charged with the safety of the other dragons too so he wouldn't do anything stupid. Hiccup relaxed slightly.

"So, what are you guys doing here? It seems like a long way from your home," Hermione asked suddenly.

Hiccup glanced at Astrid, to whom the question was directed to. She shrugged and glanced at Hiccup before replying, "Dumbledore didn't specify. But I know that it has something to do with your Tournament."

Hermione gasped. "You mean you're entering?" she asked excitedly.

Hiccup shook his head at Astrid. She glared at him slightly. "No. but other than that, we don't know," she explained.

Hermione nodded slowly. She didn't seem to understand. To be honest, Hiccup didn't quite understand why they were there either. He knew that it had something to do with one of the tasks included in the Tournament but other than that, no idea. It must be related to dragons though, otherwise they would have gotten someone else. So that narrowed it down a little bit.

The dinner came to an end and the teachers left the room. Gobber re-joined the Vikings and they stood up together. Instantly, Hiccup felt all eyes on them. They were the first to stand, and apparently there was something against that. Hiccup took another look around and noticed the glances weren't on him exactly, but on his leg.

Suddenly, a thin, white haired boy from Slytherin stood up and laughed as he walked towards Hiccup and his friends. Harry groaned inwardly and Hiccup raised his eyebrows. Apparently this was one to watch out for, he thought.

"Wow, look at the Vikings. They don't even have enough medicine to heal a leg," the boy snickered. Hiccup took in the his appearance. A blonde, almost white mop of hair sat atop his pale head. His eyes were dead cold. He was tall, but Astrid was taller. The boy seemed cruel but Hiccup knew that if worst came to worst, this guy wouldn't stand a chance against Toothless.

Astrid pushed her sleeves up and started to step forward. Hiccup hastily put his hand on her arm. She glanced at him before glaring at the guy.

Harry stood up quickly and in front of Hiccup. "That's enough, Malfoy," he snapped.

Hiccup noticed Malfoy smirk. "Need to be protected by others, eh, Hiccup? You really are a hiccup," he chuckled, his smirk still in place, infuriating Hiccup further.

Hiccup glanced at Astrid and spoke to her in their native language, Norse. Something so ancient that none of these people would be able to understand. They couldn't catch any of the words anyway, because of how quietly the pair were speaking.

Snotlout laughed at Malfoy. "You don't know Hiccup then," he snickered. Malfoy didn't seem to like Snotlout. Yet, Hiccup thought, they weren't really that different.

Hiccup stood up straighter and moved his metal leg, the sound resonating through the hall loudly. "Look, Malfoy, my name might be Hiccup, but at least I don't look like I'm dead," he snapped.

The hall went silent. Hiccup was fuming. How dare someone make fun of his metal leg? He was known throughout the village for it. He'd killed the Red Death. Toothless had saved Hiccup and in the process bitten off Hiccup's leg. He was proud of it. It connected him to his dragon.

Astrid pushed Hiccup away and towards the door. Malfoy snickered.

"What, getting your girlfriend to stop you from fighting? She's probably weaker than you anyway," he smirked.

Hiccup went red. He turned around and was about to comment, to say something witty, but Astrid stopped him.

"It's not worth it, Hiccup," she warned.

Hiccup shook his head and sighed, knowing that she was right. Instead, he turned around and glared directly into Malfoy's eyes. That always got to people. "You say that now, Malfoy. Yet you know nothing of the Viking ways, nor do you know anything about me. Who knows, maybe I got this leg chopped off during battle...but I'm way\_ too skilled for that to happen," he smirked, turning back around. He didn't want to brag about how he'd gotten the leg. He had just wanted to point out that he could be dangerous. And if worst came to worst, he could always just use the leg as a weapon.

Hiccup stormed off, the other Vikings following him closely. Once they were outside of the hall, Hiccup let out a heavy breath. "How dare he say those things about me!" he fumed.

Astrid put her hand on his shoulder gently. "It's alright, Hiccup. What he doesn't know is that you saved our village. You united us. I bet that idiot's done nothing more than say a few nasty things here and there," she said. Hiccup smiled at her. She knocked him over the head and dragged him back towards the boat.

When they reached got closer, Toothless growled loudly and an ear-splitting screech followed. Hiccup rolled his eyes and called to Toothless. The dragon leapt over the boat and onto the pier, quickly running towards Hiccup and knocking him over. The dark dragon picked up Hiccup and placed him gently onto his back. Hiccup laughed and rubbed his neck.

The other Vikings called to their dragons as well and they soon stood beside the Vikings. Gobber didn't have one of his own yet, but he still liked their presence. If the situation deemed it necessary, he flew on Hookfang or Stormfly. Suddenly, Toothless growled and Hiccup followed the dragon's gaze.

Dumbledore was heading towards the Vikings with two teachers behind him. Hiccup recognised them from the staff table in the Great Hall. One was the potions master, the other transfigurations. At least, that's what Hiccup remembered.

"I take it you will not be staying in your wooden boat?" Dumbledore asked.

Hiccup stiffly shook his head. "No," he gritted out. Toothless bared his teeth and growled loudly. Dumbledore didn't seem to care, but the two other teachers took a wary step back. Hiccup thought it was quite clever of them to do so. This headmaster, on the other hand, didn't seem like the sharpest tool in the shed.

Gobber stepped forward and between the angry dragon and the headmaster. "Well, we can't very well have a bunch of fire breathing dragons on a boat in the middle of a lake, now can we?" he asked, trying to lighten the mood.

Hiccup rolled his eyes at Gobber. Toothless looked up at Hiccup and then back to Dumbledore. He didn't like it when his rider was upset.

"There is some space in the Gryffindor tower, at the very top. You would have to keep your dragons up there unless you are taking them to the Forbidden Forest," Dumbledore explained.

The female teacher stepped forward before Hiccup could say anything. "If you would like to follow me?" she asked politely. Toothless stopped growling when he realised that she was kinder than the headmaster.

Hiccup looked at Dumbledore before they left and asked, "When will be finding out the purpose of our visit?" he asked stiffly.

Dumbledore looked towards the forest. "Well, the dragons should be here within the hour. So get settled soon and we shall get started. Meet us in the Forbidden Forest in two hours."

Hiccup nodded slowly and they followed the transfiguration teacher. She talked to Gobber the whole way to the top of the tower, their conversation light and polite. Hiccup had to ride on Toothless up the stairs, because his leg was starting to cause him grief. Toothless didn't mind; his rider was so light that it almost didn't affect him.

After a few minutes, they reached the top of the stairs. The professor opened a large wooden door and revealed a warm, red and gold common room. There were no people around but the room had multiple armchairs and small couches. Tables lined the corners and a fireplace sat next to the door. There was a flight of stairs at the other end of the room, splitting into two directions.

"This will be your room for the time being. Rooms on the left are for men, girls on the right. Breakfast and all other meals are served in the Great Hall. Your seats are reserved as they were today," the Professor explained before nodding at them once and heading out the door.

Hiccup headed towards the rooms in which he found multiple bunk beds. He didn't like them. They felt all soft and wrong and there was no place for Toothless to sleep comfortably. The other Vikings, however, had no problem with the new room. Snotlout and Tuffnut fought over the top bed and their dragons had room next door. Barf and Belch went on the girl's side, with Meatlug and Stormfly, only because Ruffnut had won the rights to have him over there.

Hiccup sighed and made his way back to the common room. There was a nice spot by the fire which Toothless instantly leapt over to. Hiccup followed him and leant against Toothless' back. He sighed and watched his dragon drift into a peaceful sleep. Hiccup wouldn't bring Toothless to meet the other dragons. He would be too protective and he didn't want Toothless getting hurt.

Astrid and Ruffnut walked back into the common room and Astrid smirked knowingly. "Can't find a bed to your liking?" she asked while maintaining her knowing expression.

Hiccup nodded and sighed. "There wasn't any space for Toothless

either, it's not just me. But we have to make do out here." Toothless would sleep wherever Hiccup was, and it worked the other way around too. There was no way that Hiccup was going let Toothless sleep somewhere else. They were safer together.

Gobber came back down from his own room singing happy tunes. Hiccup sent him an odd glance. "You alright, Gobber?" he teased.

Gobber laughed and sat on the couch. "Never better. Well, yeah, I have been better, but you know what I mean." Hiccup sent him a look telling him to explain. "Oh. Well, I was listening to the Headmaster talk to Hagrid. He's a half giant. Hard to miss. He's the keeper of magical creatures and such. They were talking about the first task. You'll never believe what it is."

Astrid looked at Hiccup. "Dragons?" he asked. He guessed that because Dumbledore had said some were arriving later that evening and Hiccup didn't think that he meant their own dragons. So it must be for the first task. Hiccup wondered who would be competing for the Triwizard Tournament. Not that he cared very much, he just wanted to make sure that they didn't hurt the dragons.

Gobber nodded. "Yeah, that's it. But there are a few names I didn't recognise and some I did," he added quickly, seeing the look Fishlegs was giving him.

Hiccup nodded. "Well, we'll just have to wait for a couple of hours to find out. In the meantime, I would like some time to myself," he muttered the last part. He wanted to draw the castle as he saw it. He loved to draw and he would be able to keep it and make sure that future generations knew what this school was like, should they ever need to know.

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><p>Harry kept thinking about the one legged Viking boy. He looked so young, yet he'd obviously been in battle. He seemed a lot stronger than Harry had expected. Malfoy hadn't managed to aggravate the boy until he'd started insulting the girl which was a whole other thing. Were Hiccup and Astrid together? Or were they just friends? Hogwarts had never actually had Vikings in school before. They were thought to be completely tough people who only cared about their own but Hiccup seemed to care about more than just himself and his friends.</p>

Hermione, Ron and Harry were sitting in their common room and studying for an upcoming test. They were all pretty happy with it, Transfiguration was getting better for all of them. Hermione was by far the best of the three but Harry wasn't bothered. In fact, it was helpful; she gave them answers.

Harry perked his ears as he heard the sound of something heading up the tower. A couple of the Gryffindor's almost opened the doors, but the sounds disappeared before anyone could have a look. Harry thought it odd, because this was the only place in the Gryffindor tower which was worth going. Unless it was one of the new students or the Vikings staying in the spare rooms. That would make sense. It still didn't explain the louder sounds. The ones which sounded too heavy and loud to be human.

After the noises passed, the students headed to their rooms and got ready for bed. Harry followed Ron and his fellow roommates up to the dormitories. He got changed out of his robes and into something comfortable. They were all pretty tired and they would find out about the Triwizard Tournament later, hopefully tomorrow. Harry was pretty excited about that.

Harry took off his glasses and the world immediately became fuzzy. Just as he was about to pull the covers over his body, Ron struck up a conversation. "Hey, Harry, what did you think of those Vikings?"

Harry sat up and put his glasses back on. He glanced over at Ron, who was in the same position as him. "I don't know. It was cool though, that twig standing up to Malfoy," he admitted.

Ron nodded enthusiastically. "Yeah. I'd never seen anybody stand up to him like that. Not even us. And we fight all the time," he remarked.

Harry nodded slowly, thinking. Yeah, what was with that? Was it something that Hiccup was used to? He seemed to look at Snotlout with a bit of aggravation. Maybe it was one of Hiccup's friends who treated him like Malfoy treated Harry? But it didn't make sense to be friends with someone that treated him like that.

"Well, they aren't here to enter the Tournament. What are they here for?" Harry wondered aloud.

Ron almost shouted as he had an idea, "Well, Vikings are known for their harshness and cruelty. Maybe they are here for the champions to fight or something."

Harry snickered. "Whoever has to fight Hiccup gets it lucky," he laughed. That boy was such a twig that taking down him would be a piece of cake. Although, Hiccup had already been in battle, that much was obvious. What was life like for Vikings, anyway?

Ron rolled his eyes. "Or maybe it's something else. Maybe they're here to distract the students. I mean, they are a pretty funny sight. Especially that Fishlegs," he remarked.

"Yeah, well. It's not like a guy his size could really help it. And besides, it seems as though its standard Viking size. Did you see the leader up on the teacher's table?"

Ron laughed. "Yeah, I suppose. Which makes it even funnier about Hiccup."

Harry shrugged. "I reckon he's quite nice. I mean, for a Viking," he quickly finished.

Ron gave him an odd look. "Yeah. I liked that Astrid. She was kind of...cute. In an 'I'm going to kill you' kind of way," he said.

Harry laughed and looked at Ron as though he had said the funniest thing ever. "You're kidding me, right? You like Astrid?"

Ron nodded slowly, not seeing what was so funny. Harry rolled his

eyes. "She's already with Hiccup. I mean, even if they don't know it yet," Harry finished.

Ron rolled his eyes, seeing what was so funny. "Yeah, I could see that. I still think she's cute."

"Don't let Fleur catch you saying that," Harry smirked. Fleur was one of the girls from the Beauxbatons Academy who had come to stay. Ron had been infatuated with her the moment that she'd walked through the doors. Harry wasn't surprised. Ron was very easily taken with beautiful girls. The only problem was they very rarely liked him back.

Ron blushed and muttered a quick, "Goodnight, Harry." before pulling his bed curtains closed.

Harry laughed and took his glasses off once more. He lay down in his bed, turned out his light and stared up at the ceiling. Things would have to get better from now on. They had to. Harry couldn't keep living his life thinking that Voldemort was around the corner. He couldn't go on like that. Something needed to change.

## 2. Chapter 2

Hiccup and his friends were in the Forbidden forest on time. They found Hagrid's hut, he was a huge giant who led them towards the dragons. Hiccup wasn't surprised to see them all fussing. They were in cages - ones which prevented them from moving, and they had muzzles to stop them throwing fire everywhere, not that it worked very well.

It was a site Hiccup thought that he would never have to see again. The poor treatment of dragons wasn't something Hiccup was comfortable with. He was glad that Toothless had stayed back in the room, he didn't think that the dragon would take as kindly to this sort of treatment as Hiccup was, but saying that, Hiccup couldn't believe that these people were the best dragon keepers in the wizarding world. What did that say about the others? They just kept them on the verge of death or something?

The keepers, only three, walked over to the Vikings. Standing next to them was the headmaster and Hagrid, who had joined them after leading the Vikings there. The keepers seemed to notice the Vikings distaste for the way the dragons were caged, though they said nothing and Hiccup knew it was a smart move.

"These are the dragons which the champions will be facing." Dumbledore said pointedly.

Hiccup nodded. "How many champions are there?" he asked.

"Three. But there are more dragons so that we have spares and can also choose the best ones." Hiccup didn't like that. Spares. So if one died... he didn't want to think about that.

Dumbledore didn't notice Hiccup's anger. The other Vikings did however. "So what do you want us to do?"

This time it was the keepers who stepped forward. It was a tall man

with orange hair and pale skin. He reminded Hiccup of Ron. "We are professionals, but we have heard that you don't even need magic to calm down the beasts." He said.

Hiccup shrugged. Gobber stepped forwards. "That doesn't explain what you need us to do. Because we can still refuse." Hiccup gasped. Gobber!

Dumbledore said nothing and Hiccup paled considerably. The keepers exchanged looks. "From what I have heard, you don't have a choice but to help us."

Astrid rolled up her sleeves and Hiccup held her back patiently. She glared at the keepers and headmaster equally. So, they weren't in her grace books. That wasn't such a good thing. For them.

"Well, it won't be necessary until after the champions are chosen, but we will need your help to keep these dragons calm." The orange headed Ron almost lookalike said.

Hiccup swallowed. "And how long will that be?" he asked nervously. He didn't want these dragons in the sole hands of the keepers for very long.

Dumbledore answered this time. "In two days. Don't worry, young Hiccup, the dragons are in very safe hands."

Hiccup didn't feel reassured. None of them did. Not even Gobber. In fact, Gobber felt the need to speak up. "Right. Well, when we come to help, if I find a single one of those dragons in these cages, I'm going to be very angry." He warned.

The keepers exchanged looks. "We can't change them." Ron lookalike said slowly.

Gobber laughed darkly. "Why not set them free? They're loyal, they'll stay with you." He said.

Ron Lookalike shook his head. "They are dangerous beasts which don't have any mind unless it's to kill. They are mindless and forget things the minute after you tell them something. So they shall stay in their cages."

Hiccup's blood boiled. "They are not mindless beasts!" he shouted loudly. He worried for a minute that Toothless had heard him, but after hearing nothing in return, relaxed. He couldn't let Toothless see this, not now.

Dumbledore hushed Hiccup down instantly as he gave him a knowing look. "You will help these keepers. End of story." Then he turned and disappeared into the dark. Hiccup growled and punched a tree. He looked at the dragons, to see they were watching him as well. He darted around the keepers and towards one that he recognised, well, he recognised the species.

The Nadda crowed to him and pecked at the cage. Clearly, she was angry. She didn't want to be in there anymore than Hiccup wanted her in there. Hiccup sighed and walked over to her. She realised that Hiccup meant no harm and calmed down, stopped her pacing and breathed heavily. Hiccup smiled and reached his hand up to her nose. She leant

forward to meet it. They had done this before - there was no way that a dragon, a wild dragon, with treatment such as these, would trust Hiccup this quickly.

Hiccup stopped touching the Nadda and walked around her cage, looking for anything which would set her apart from the other Nada's which they had come across. There wasn't anything that he could tell. She looked like any other blue Nadda which always surrounded places around Berk.

Then he saw it. This Nadda came from Berk. On her tail was a distinct initial. She belonged to someone. Hiccup felt his blood boil. See, some Vikings like to put their initials in their dragons skin. Whilst Hiccup thought it cruel at the start, it worked quite well when one went missing and they couldn't tell whose was whose. Not that it should be too hard, but it didn't hurt the dragon either, they barely even felt it, it was the same temperature as their skin.

"Where did you get the dragon?" Hiccup fumed angrily.

The keepers turned around hurriedly, surprised that Hiccup was all the way inside the circle of cages. The Ron Lookalike groaned and stepped forwards. "We found it near the beach. It was causing havoc around the muggles."

Hiccup groaned. More words he didn't know what they meant. "This dragon is not an it, she is a she. And she was looking for food, probably for her babies, and she would never hurt anyone. She is one of the kindest dragons that I have ever met."

Astrid walked forwards and towards the Nadda. She gasped when she came to the same conclusion as Hiccup had: the dragon belonged to one of the women in the village. Her name was Stringlove, she was a beautiful Nadda and had beautiful babies to a wild male Nadda before Stringlove was bonded to her rider.

Hiccup gently stroked Stringlove's blue snout. The Nadda groaned unhappily. Hiccup knew that she wasn't going to be very happy, but she couldn't leave - Hiccup knew that these wizards wouldn't let her leave.

The keepers exchanged looks. "She's a deadly dragon. You need to stay away from it."

Hiccup laughed. "I don't know why you guys brought me here. It's clear that you guys don't think I can help."

The keepers exchanged looks. "It is clear to us that someone as small cannot control one of these dragons. We just need your leader, the dragon trainer." The taller dragon keeper said. He had darker skin and hair and looked completely different to the other two.

Hiccup laughed. "You realise that I'm the dragon trainer?"

The keepers looked shocked, but recovered quickly. They started to laugh and then turned away. Hiccup scowled and stalked off towards the tower. Toothless was the only one who could calm him down now. His friends respected his mood and followed softly behind him. They left the stupid dragon keepers to their business. They didn't need

anyone's help. The dragons should kill the champions just for having such poor living conditions.

Hiccup's mood didn't increase as he climbed the large amounts of stairs. His metal leg thumped angrily against the stone floors as he fumed and put more pressure on it than necessary. It was a good thing that it wasn't hurting too badly today. There were days where it was worse than others. This one, maybe getting better. But flying with Toothless would help.

The room getting closer, Hiccup's mood lifted only slightly. He pushed it open and startled the Night Fury. Hiccup apologised as Toothless growled and stretched, hating haven been rudely awoken by the young Viking. Hiccup walked over and scratched the dragon under his neck. Toothless purred and collapsed on the ground. Hiccup laughed, his mood gone and happiness replaced. Toothless always made him feel happy.

Hiccup opened the window and stepped onto the balcony. Toothless followed quietly behind and waited for Hiccup to regather his thoughts. Hiccup leaned against the edge of the balcony and ran a hand through his hair angrily. He looked to Toothless and he walked up to him and nudged his shoulder with his head.

Toothless grumbled anxiously as Hiccup started to get worked up again. Toothless didn't like his best friend being upset, it made him feel useless instead of Toothless. He licked Hiccup and pushed him over, landing against the rail of the balcony. Hiccup laughed.

"Alright bud, I'm alright now." Hiccup reassured the near black but blue dragon. Toothless purred happily as Hiccup scratched the dragon under his head and under his wings, where he wouldn't be able to scratch himself.

Hiccup stood up and looked over the saddle on Toothless' back. He made sure that the connecting tail and fin was safe and then mounted the dragon. Toothless excitedly pawed the ground as he waited for Hiccup to clip himself in and move the tailfin. Hiccup rolled his eyes and let the dragon leap off the group.

Toothless screeched loudly and the sound of his wings was heard as they shot straight up towards the clouds. Hiccup leant forwards and smiled as the wind rushed against his face. He loved being in the air. Being with Toothless. He always felt so free. Able to be who he truly was. The dragon was the added bonus. Toothless was amazing and never did anything Hiccup wouldn't want him to. Most other dragons didn't care about their riders the way that Toothless did. But none of the other riders cared the way Hiccup did.

Once the duo were in the clouds, Toothless opened his wings out fully and glided amongst them. Hiccup leant back against Toothless' flat back and looked up at the stars. He loved watching them. Toothless flapped his wings slowly as they glided around the school grounds. They were safe from watching eyes, nobody would be up now, it was past curfew, which thankfully didn't effect Hiccup or their gang.

Toothless dove straight towards the lake and Hiccup grabbed back hold of the saddle, holding one hand out and laughing. The wind made his

hair whip angrily around his face, yet Hiccup didn't care. He bounced around as Toothless roared again, louder, and shot a blue plasma blast along the water surface. The water reflected the colours and rippled as the blast exploded and the force sent a blast of wind rippling back.

Hiccup turned Toothless over in spirals and they shot straight back to the clouds. Toothless grumbled as he effortlessly avoided the clouds. It was their game. They had obstacles which constantly changed, they couldn't touch them. Hiccup loved it because of how hard it became at night. Especially when there weren't very many around.

Toothless shot several more blasts above the clouds, dispersing the larger ones and causing them to leak water towards the school. Hiccup shrugged as the dragon charged through the little rain and shot back towards the ground.

Hiccup landed Toothless on the balcony again and hopped off, hugging the dragon. They both stayed that way for a moment, Hiccup not wanting to let go of his best friend. Of course, Toothless was the one to break it up. He pulled away and licked Hiccup all along his body. Hiccup laughed as he shook off the dragon saliva.

Toothless squawked and pushed Hiccup inside the room, afraid that his rider would get cold. It was his own fault though, really. Hiccup laughed and allowed the dragon to push him inside.

Astrid and Gobber were waiting up for Hiccup once he got back. Toothless stood behind him as the two Vikings confronted the smaller one.

"Are you alright, Hiccup? You seemed pretty worked up before." Astrid asked gently. She was pretty upset with the way that the dragons were treated, but she didn't care as much as Hiccup. Hiccup was the first Viking to ever not kill a dragon and he felt it his duty to make sure that no one else did. But these people... it was different. Even Astrid didn't understand it.

Hiccup nodded slowly and put his hand on Toothless. "Yeah. I am now. I just got really aggravated. And when they started to bag my own dragon skills? They should just release Stringlove. She did nothing wrong." At the mention of Stringlove, Toothless perked. He gave Hiccup a quizzical glance. He and she weren't very close, but he did know her. She was one of the few dragons that were afraid of him, and he tried to be as nice as possible around her.

Astrid nodded slowly and sat down, encouraging Hiccup to sit down next to her. Toothless hurried to curl up and let Hiccup lean against him. Hiccup laughed and leant against the dragon. Toothless mumbled and closed his eyes, tired and ready to go to bed.

"It'll be alright. You'll be able to look after the dragons. None of the rest of us could get as close to them as you could." Astrid reminded him.

Hiccup sighed and looked at her with dull eyes. "Yeah? I wish I could be that confident." He admitted.

Astrid smacked him lightly and stood up. "Well, night Hiccup. Just

remember that I believe in you. You always do the right thing." Then she went to her room with Roughnut. Hiccup sighed and slid down on the floor, breathing heavily against Toothless.

Toothless blinked and opened his eyes. Hiccup smiled and gently stroked his head. Toothless purred and closed his eyes again. Hiccup laughed gently and grabbed a blanket from the couch. Hiccup realised that it was one from the beds. He would have to thank his friends the next morning.

Hiccup curled up close to the dragon and Toothless curled his wing around Hiccup. They both fell into a dreamless sleep. Hiccup didn't think once about the other dragons, he was happy about that.

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><p>Harry wasn't ready for his next day. They were going to be hearing about the tournament. He wanted to enter, but he knew the chances were slim. The chances of survival for those entered were slimmer. Harry just wanted to enter his <em>name</em> and then he would give up.

Ron and Harry headed towards breakfast. Ron was talking fast about what they were doing. Who was going to be the champion for their school? Names circled Harry's head, yet he wasn't paying attention. He couldn't think about anything. He was worried, and it wasn't for himself - it was unnecessary worry, for those who were going to enter. For Voldemort. No, he didn't want him around. That's what he was worried about. That he was.

Harry was surprised to see that the Vikings were already seated in the same seats as the previous day when they arrived downstairs. The taller, and bulky one was at the teachers table as was previously. Strangely, Harry found it difficult to believe that he was the leader of the group. He didn't seem like... leader quality.

Hermione joined her two friends and sat next to Hiccup. Hiccup seemed grim this morning. Harry wondered what had crawled up his butt and died. Hiccup barely looked up at the entrance of Hermione or Harry. Astrid put her hand on Hiccup's shoulder and shook it, he barely smiled.

There was definitely something wrong with Hiccup. It couldn't be something that the Slitherins had done, could it? Surely they wouldn't stoop that low, Harry wondered, but the young Viking seemed really depressed - like something really terrible had happened.

Hermione was the one to finally ask. She was nosy and kind, and she cared. They were the qualities which sometimes didn't go quite to plan, but this time, it seemed alright, except they had the attention of all the Vikings except that at the teachers table.

"Are you alright, Hiccup?" she asked gently.

Hiccup sighed and looked up at Hermione. Harry noticed that his eyes were sparkling with un-shed tears. "Yeah. I'm alright. It's just... complicated." He replied. His voice was soft and Harry knew that something terrible was going on.

Hermione shook her head sadly. "You can talk to us, Hiccup. We don't bite."

Hiccup smiled a little at that. Astrid smacked his shoulder and smirked. There must have been an inside joke that Harry didn't understand. "I know. I only have one friend who does." He joked. Then he went back to his dull mood. "But you wouldn't understand. No one here does. I mean, would you keep a cat in a cage all its life and make it suffer? No? Then why do it with—" he cut himself off and breathed deeply.

Astrid sighed as Hiccup stood angrily and stuffed some fish into his pockets then left the breakfast hall. No one stopped the Viking as he left the hall. Except for Malfoy. Harry sucked in a breath as the Slytherin boy stood up and tripped Hiccup.

Hiccup landed on his face and stood back up instantly. Harry couldn't help but admire his reflexes, apart from the falling over part, he didn't want to fall over all the time.

"Have a nice trip?" Malfoy snickered.

Hiccup scowled and went to step away from the Slytherin when Malfoy restrained him with his hand. Hiccup wasn't strong enough to pull away. Poor little Viking, Harry thought. "I don't want any trouble, Malfoy." Hiccup muttered.

Malfoy snickered and pushed Hiccup. "Shame, real shame. One legged man like yourself. Say, what did you do to lose your leg? Fall down a well? Crash into a brick wall?" he smirked.

Hiccup glared at him and stood up. He tried to rise over Malfoy, but Harry knew that he was failing miserably. Harry could see that the Viking was smaller in more ways than one. The wizard was just stronger than Hiccup.

Harry glanced up as Astrid and Snotlout hurried to Hiccup's aid. The twins followed quickly and then Fishlegs sighed as he left his food sadly. Harry didn't know what was going to happen. Malfoy getting his butt kicked seemed likely though.

"You leave Hiccup alone or you're going to wish you'd never even heard the word Viking." Astrid growled angrily at Malfoy. Harry had to admit, she scared him. More than Hermione ever would. He glanced at Hermione and saw her nodding her head approvingly. She seemed to like this Astrid.

Malfoy swallowed, but his pride kept him going. Harry knew that he should just give up. This was a dangerous game, especially with strong Vikings in the area. "Yeah? He's so weak that he thinks a girl can defend him." Malfoy turned to his friends briefly as he said this, but turned back to face the Vikings.

Snotlout laughed. "Wow. That's the same excuse he used yesterday." He remarked. Hiccup turned to him and smiled. Snotlout smirked and rolled his eyes. So, Harry thought, Snotlout was nothing like Malfoy. Just a pain.

Hiccup ducked away and towards the exit of the great hall. Malfoy called out and was cut off. Harry saw Astrid's hand covering his

mouth. The twins were cheering her on. What was with them anyway? These Vikings sure were strange. Hiccup smirked just before he left and then he was gone. Harry didn't think that he would see the young twig of a Viking until later.

Harry sat back in his chair and looked at Hermione. The Vikings came back to sit and they all seemed rather angry. Harry looked at Astrid. She stabbed her fish angrily. Did they ever eat anything normal? Of course, granted, they were ancient in their ways, they lived in wooden houses and didn't have electricity. Not too different from Hogwarts, but Harry also lived in the muggle world.

Hermione started to talk to Astrid. They seemed to become good friends by the end of it. They were similar: they were both protective of their friends. Astrid seemed to avoid talking about Hiccup a lot, but she mentioned a Stormfly quite often. Harry thought it was her pet - maybe a dog or a cat, or an owl, but these were Vikings. For all he knew... it could be a lion.

Fishlegs and Snotlout struck up a conversation. Harry couldn't hear what they were saying, and it wouldn't have helped anyway - they were speaking in Norse. There was no way that he could learn something so ancient anyway: there weren't any books on the forgotten language.

Harry talked to Ron for a while. They talked about their classes which they had today. Unfortunately, it included classes with Slitherin. That meant with Malfoy. They were the worst. The only thing worse than having a class with a Slitherin was having a potions class with Sliherin.

After a while, Dumbledore called the attention of the students. Harry perked up instantly. A huge covered statues moved into the room and Harry gave it a glance before drawing his attention to the headmaster. Dumbledore waved and the students waved back. This wasn't quite usual.

"As you are all aware, this year is the Tri Wizard Tournament. Because of past tournaments, there will be an age limit of only over seventeen year olds. To make sure that it is adhered to, I will be casting an aging line around the goblet." Dumbledore announced loudly. The room was silent. Too silent.

Dumbledore passed over to Barty Crouch. A member of the Ministry of Magic was the leader of this whole operation? Harry couldn't help but be confused. But then, it is a world famous and acknowledged event. Harry knew this even without knowing much of wizards.

"For those of you who want to enter, you have until tomorrow to enter your name into the Goblet of Fire. Once entered, you can't undo it." Barty Crouch announced loudly. Everyone in the room stayed silent. People were glancing at each other excitedly however. The Ministry member uncovered the Goblet and gasps went around the room. The blue flame was quite magnificent, sitting atop a gold Goblet. Harry was in awe of it. He didn't wish to be seventeen, yet he did wish that he could touch the shiny object. Harry looked at the Vikings and noticed that they were in shock of the Goblet, but it was nothing new.

Barty Crouch explained a few more things: that the champions would be chosen at dinner tomorrow, the first task wasn't for another month;

the champions weren't allowed to know what the tasks were in advance. No one but the organises were. When Barty Crouch said such a thing, the Vikings exchanged looks and were smug. Harry knew there was something going on but said nothing.

The teachers finished their breakfast and left the Goblet where people could put their name in. Harry finished his breakfast and headed outside. The fresh air was nice. He headed for the tower and collected his books for first class. He liked to be on time when there were special events going on, and people would still be with the Goblet.

Harry bumped suddenly into someone in the courtyard. He looked down to see Hiccup on the ground holding his head. Instantly the wizard felt bad, he'd hurt the young Viking. He swore he hadn't meant to. On the bright side, Hiccup wasn't looking so unhappy. In fact, he looked really happy. His clothes were slightly windswept and dishevelled, and his hair more so, but he looked in a good mood.

"Oh, sorry, Hiccup. I didn't see you there." Harry apologised as he bent down and offered his hand to Hiccup.

Hiccup shrugged and pulled himself up. "It's alright. It's nothing I'm not used to." He said. He dusted himself off and headed towards the edge of the school. Harry watched the strange Viking leave the school grounds and head towards the Forbidden forest. What was he doing around there? Maybe seeing Hagrid...

Harry shrugged it off and headed towards class. He had a long day and wanted to get started. He couldn't help thinking of why the Viking was so upset earlier. There was something wrong and Harry wasn't the sort of person to let someone be upset like that, neither were either of his friends. Hermione would get to Hiccup. She would tell Harry what the problem was, and then they could help to fix it.

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><p>Hiccup couldn't believe his rotten luck. Not only had he bumped into Malfoy earlier, but he'd been called into the forest by none other than mister charming headmaster Dumbledore. He couldn't imagine how the students actually <em>liked</em> the guy. He was such an ignorant... not caring little twit!

Toothless made Hiccup happy though. Whilst the other Vikings were inside the hall eating their food, Hiccup and Toothless had had their morning flight. Toothless had enjoyed it and received the fish which Hiccup had stuffed into his pockets. They were getting fish by some unknown staff, but Hiccup still liked to give the dragon his own treat.

Hiccup kicked pebbles as he headed towards the dragons. Dumbledore had told him that there was a problem and they needed help early. Hiccup wasn't happy, but Dumbledore had happily reminded him of their little... deal. Hiccup wasn't happy at all.

Once Hiccup reached the dragons, he found the keepers outside what looked like a Monstrous Nightmare. It was a dark shade of blue, yet not quite Toothless and had red through its coat. Hiccup had never seen a Nightmare quite like this one, but it had to be one from the way it lit its body on fire. That was pretty cool, Hiccup had always

admired that about the species.

The three keepers looked as though they were trying to feed the dragon, yet they couldn't open the cage to get the food into it. Hiccup sighed angrily and stalked towards them. When they turned, they seemed surprised to see Hiccup there.

"We thought Dumbledore was getting the dragon trainer?" the Ron Lookalike said, shocked. He almost lost grip on the dragon's cage due to his shock. Hiccup smirked.

"I am the dragon trainer." He announced proudly. Sure, be proud now, Hiccup, he scolded himself.

All three keepers laughed. "Sure. Sure." They all agreed in teasing manners. They couldn't believe that someone of Hiccup's build wouldn't be able to control a dragon? Well, he'd show them. They just had to wait to meet Toothless, and then they'd get the real shock.

Hiccup shoved the three keepers out of the way. The dragon stopped moving around for a moment and Hiccup stared at the creature. He moved around a bit and snorted, his breath coming out in hot puffs. Hiccup stepped back and showed to the dragon that he had no weapons. The dragon huffed and glanced at the Wizards. Hiccup rolled his eyes for a moment.

When the dragon stilled, Hiccup stepped forward and grabbed hold of the fish. The dragon jostled forwards and tried to grab the fish, but the cage stopped him. Hiccup glared at the wizards and then put the fish through the bars. The dragon swallowed it whole.

"Well. That solves that problem." Hiccup said, wiping his hands. The dragon clicked to Hiccup and insisted upon more. Hiccup rolled his eyes and looked at the keepers. "Go on. He won't hurt you if you don't hurt him. It's a mutual thing." He explained. Hiccup took a step back and admired the dragons in the day time. He pretended that the cages weren't there and found that there were four in which he didn't recognise the breeds, but there were a few which he did. There was a zippieback, a Gronkle and a terrible terror. That was a joke, right? There were two Nada's as well. Stringlove and another brown one. There was a Typhoomerang, which surprised Hiccup incredibly. They were massive. But this was just a baby. That made Hiccup angry. They shouldn't have a baby dragon in their cages, babies were innocent, they had to have a free life.

Hiccup noticed a change wing. The keepers probably thought that the silly dragon escaped all the time, but that wasn't the case, the dragon was just extremely good at camouflage - you could only see them if you were looking hard enough.

The keepers turned to Hiccup. "Thankyou, Hiccup."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "You know, I still don't know your names."

They laughed and exchanged looks. The Ron Lookalike said, "I'm Charlie Weasly. You might know my brother, Ron." He introduced.

Hiccup nodded and looked to the taller darker one. "Jeremy Gerard." He said.

The last one was a pale and shorter one, with brown hair. "And I'm Kingsly." He didn't provide a last name, which shocked Hiccup. He wouldn't be needing the last name anyway. He wasn't an idiot, he called people by their first names, he always did, it was standard protocol.

Hiccup turned and waved goodbye to the keepers. He would be back to make sure that these dragons were in good hands, but for now, he had a dragon which needed some comfort, or the other way around. Either way, Hiccup wanted to spend the day with Toothless. He loved his friends, but he loved Toothless more. And there would never be a competition between them. Hiccup would always save Toothless first.

The school was quiet. That meant that classes were already on. That meant that Hiccup and Toothless were free to wander around aimlessly. Hiccup beamed and headed towards the rooms where they were staying. He stopped at the door when he heard someone talking inside. It sounded a lot like Dumbledore and that Barty Crouch person.

Hiccup entered and immediately everyone stopped talking. Toothless dashed over to Hiccup and growled loudly at the two professionals in the room. Hiccup didn't even bother calming the dragon. He didn't want to. Toothless could growl all he wanted.

Dumbledore noticed that Hiccup wasn't going to stop the dragon and sighed. "We might have started on the wrong foot."

Hiccup looked down at his left foot, shaking a little and smiling inwardly. "That's hard, considering I only have one." he said with a slight teasing hint in his tone.

Dumbledore ignored him and continued, "But I am thankful that you did decide to come along."

"Because I had a choice?" Hiccup said sarcastically.

Dumbledore, once again, ignored him. "Yes. If you didn't, though, we would have killed every dragon here though. It really was your choice."

Hiccup bent his head and his eyes snapped open. He knew this deal, but he'd never said it quite like that: like he was still going to do it. "You will not." He forced out. "Because if you do, you're going to \_wish you were never born\_." Hiccup snapped. Toothless growled loudly and crouched into a spring position. This time, Hiccup gently restrained the dragon.

Dumbledore nodded. "Right. Well. I'd like to see you try. But you've proven my point. You can tame the wildest dragons and make them safe. That's what you're going to do for the dragons in the tournament." Dumbledore explained.

Astrid stepped forwards, as did Gobber. "You're forgetting that Hiccup didn't \_tame\_ Toothless. He \_befriended\_ him. Toothless and Hiccup are best \_friends\_. You just don't realise this." She snapped.

Dumbledore and Barty Crouch exchanged glances. "Well, you're going to have to make the dragons more placid. It will take time. They're pretty wild."

Hiccup laughed, the sound not as nice as it usually was. "See, I was just there. A Monstrous Nightmare practically ate from my fingers. Imagine what would happen if he was free? Out of his cage? Do you know what cages do to dragons? You just don't cage them. They are wild. Born to be free." Hiccup explained.

Astrid looked surprised. "You went without us?" she asked, shocked.

Hiccup nodded, keeping his head down. "I had to. I didn't have time. They were going to hurt the Nightmare. I couldn't let that happen."

Toothless gave Hiccup a proud smile in his eyes and turned back towards Dumbledore. Hiccup apologized to Astrid briefly before watching Dumbledore's next excuse. He was such an idiot.

"Right. Tomorrow I expect you to be working with the dragons then. I don't want them let out of their protective cages." Dumbledore said.

Just before he walked out of the door, Hiccup snapped at him, with words, of course. "Who are you protecting? The dragons or the keepers?"

Hiccup didn't want an answer. He stormed towards the balcony with Toothless in tow. They looked out and down the castle, now that it was lighter, Hiccup was able to see where everything was and was able to draw a much clearer picture. Toothless curled up beside Hiccup and watched the drawing. Astrid stayed with Stormfly until she couldn't bear to wait any longer.

"Hiccup, I know that this is hard for you, but we're your friends. We're here for you." Astrid said, placing her hand gently on Hiccup's shoulder.

He sighed and looked up at her. "I know Astrid. I know. I just... when Dumbledore threatens the lives of all those dragons, I feel like I have to do something. I can't just watch, you know?" he sighed and felt himself slide down. Toothless pushed against Hiccup's lap and he laughed.

Astrid nodded and sat beside Hiccup, watching as he continued to draw the school. Hiccup put in all the details which he could remember, and he had a pretty good memory. He was running low on ink, but he had a feeling that the school would have some. They were pretty basic - primitive - but not as low as the Vikings, but Hiccup enjoyed their way of life.

The group stayed silent until they heard someone snore. Hiccup laughed and shoved Toothless slightly, instantly shutting him up. Toothless drifted back to sleep, thankfully without snoring. Hiccup scratched his head lightly and stood up. He would give Toothless some time to relax.

Astrid stood and followed Hiccup to the living area of the dorm. Gobber was in his rooms, but everyone else was in the common area. They looked up and waved. The twins, of course, were devising a plan for them to blow something up with Barf and Belch without anyone noticing. Snotlout was looking at himself in the mirror. Fishlegs, of course, was reading books. But surprisingly, they weren't on dragons.

"Hiccup!" Roughnut shouted as she jumped over her brother and headed towards Hiccup. "We're going to blow up the flags on the roof. It takes skill to hit only the flags. You want to join? You've got the dragon with the best aim." She insisted.

As much as Hiccup wanted to blow something up on the school, get even, he knew he shouldn't. "Well, the offer sounds nice," he received a punch in the gut from Astrid, so he wheezed on. "But I'll have to refuse." He bent over and clutched his stomach.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "OH, come on, I didn't hit you that hard." She teased. Unfortunately, she didn't know her own strength. And that was unfortunate for everyone around her.

Hiccup nodded as he doubled over and put his hand on the back of the chair for support. He liked Astrid a lot, but she was just a bit rough on him, and he was still the weakest Viking Berk had ever seen, so it wasn't hard for her to be stronger than him.

Toughnut walked over to them and started babbling about how much fun they were going to have blowing up the flags. Hiccup wondered when they were going to do such activities. When he voiced his concerns, he got the "During classes next hour." In return. Hiccup sighed and shook his head, standing up straight.

Fishlegs joined them and started talking about what wizards could do to prevent such attacks on the school. Hiccup didn't actually think that they would be smart enough to put things up like that.

"Well, as much fun as you guys aren't." Roughnut started.

Toughnut finished for her. "We're going to get our dragon ready."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Just don't get seen, alright? You don't want that to happen."

The twins both nodded, as though it was the silly-est question they'd heard all day. Hiccup shrugged them off. They were pretty silly sometimes, morons even, but they were still friends and Hiccup couldn't help but worry over them.

Hiccup watched the twins leave the common room and prepare their dragon in their dorm. Well, he didn't watch them in the dorm, but he knew that they were in there. Hiccup went back to the balcony where the sleeping Night Fury was still, well, sleeping.

Astrid joined Hiccup and lent against the railing. Hiccup smiled as they looked out at the sky. The light clouds which circled the school, the huge turrets reaching up to the clouds. Hiccup could tell that they were in the tallest tower by the way that he could see over everything.

Hiccup heard Toothless grumble and looked down. Astrid rolled her eyes at the dragon and called to her own. Stormfly croaked and thudded towards them. Toothless immediately shot awake and stood in front of Hiccup. Upon realising that it was Stormfly, he grumbled and leant back down and closed his eyes. Hiccup laughed lightly at the dragon.

"Hey, girl. We need to go for a fly, don't we?" Astrid asked as she patted the Nada's scaly nose. Stormfly clicked and pushed against her own rider. Hiccup always liked their relationship, only because it was nearly similar to Hiccup's and Toothless.

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><p>As Harry had predicted, they didn't see the Vikings for most of the day. They had been in class and heard what sounded like bombs going off. As soon as they'd gone out to investigate, there was nothing out of the ordinary, until they'd looked at the flags atop the turrets - they were up in smoke, but there were no people around who looked guilty. It was probably Fred and George Weasley, the notorious twins who were always up to no good.</p>

By dinner time, the Golden Trio were ready for their dinner. They were pretty hungry. The Vikings were already seated and talking about something. They looked pretty happy. Harry noticed that Hiccup also looked cheery, a first for the young man.

Harry talked to Hermione and Ron as soon as they sat down. They didn't bother toning their conversation to level that the Vikings would understand. They shouldn't be listening. Harry got the feeling that they weren't. They were all deep in their own world with their own language.

"Who do you reckon is going to be chosen from Hogwarts?" Ron asked.

Hermione looked up from her dinner and listed some people whom she thought might be good candidates for the cup. None of them were people who Harry particular liked. But that didn't matter. As long as the Champion wasn't a slitherin. They would never hear the end of it from Malfoy.

"I think the age thing is stupid." Harry looked up as Fred and George entered the conversation. They sat next to Harry and Hermione, near the Vikings. Fred was the one who had spoken.

Harry rolled his eyes. "The ageing potion didn't work?" he teased.

Fred and George glared at Harry, but said nothing. Their silence told the Golden trio more than they'd thought. Of course the ageing potion wouldn't work. Dumbledore wasn't silly enough to let the circle be fooled by an ageing potion.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Of course it didn't work. Dumbledore isn't going to be stupid enough to be fooled by something as stupid as an \_ageing potion\_," she remarked.

Fred and George muttered something which Harry didn't quite catch.

"That was why it \_would\_ work." Fred started.

"Because it was so incredibly \_stupid\_." George finished.

Harry laughed as he watched Hermione glare at her food. That wasn't really necessary, Harry thought. But it had shut his friend up, and that was sometimes a good thing. Hermione did get carried away and it annoyed practically everyone, yet they didn't say anything. She was easily hurt.

Hearing snickering, Harry looked up. Of course, he thought angrily. Malfoy and his goons were laughing and pointing at the Vikings. Couldn't he just give it a rest? He'd been at it for ages now. Granted, he'd been pestering Harry and his friends for ages, but that didn't mean that he could start to annoy the Vikings, and especially not the small one. Hiccup was clearly something special. They wouldn't have brought someone so scrawny around here for no particular reason, he had to be special.

Harry sighed and looked back at his dinner. If Malfoy was going to pick a fight on the Vikings, he didn't realise what he was getting himself into. Harry knew that the Vikings were strong. They were Vikings and history always portrayed them as the toughest of the tough.

Dumbledore ended the dinner with the usual farewells. He also reminded the students that they had until morning to put their names in the Goblet. Harry wondered who was left to still put their names into it. There wouldn't be many, they'd put their names in early.

Harry stood up to leave. He and Hermione left the Great Hall after most others. The Vikings stayed back and waited for their friend at the teachers table. Ron left with his brothers. The Vikings were strange people, Harry had to admit, but they seemed friendly enough.

Hermione looked sad as they left the dining hall. Harry wondered why, but she didn't answer. She just kept glancing behind her as though looking for someone. Once they reached the tower, she explained.  
"It's Hiccup. It seemed like false happiness at dinner. But not only was that... he was hiding something. I could sense it in his voice. He was holding back something. When I asked him who his best friend was... well, I also asked if he'd brought them along. Hiccup didn't answer."

Harry shrugged. "It's not really any of our business. I'm sure Hiccup will tell us when he wants to."

Hermione didn't seem at all comforted. Harry knew that she just wanted to know everything about them. That was the way that she was. She didn't like not knowing things. It made her seem weak. "I'm not sure. It seemed as though he'd brought someone else... someone we haven't met yet."

Harry almost laughed. "You make it sound like such a bad thing. I'm sure they just brought along a friend or someone who doesn't like company. Or they could just be hiding them from the tournament. Maybe that's the first task." He joked.

Hermione glared at her friend. "Yeah, maybe." She slowly said. She wasn't convinced. She would get to the bottom of it. She wasn't going to be left in the dark for any amounts of time. She couldn't do that. Harry was more worried for the Vikings than of her, they didn't know what they were in for.

Harry heard the sounds of footsteps and knew that the Vikings were walking up to their rooms. They'd done that for the past while and Harry was used to it. Hermione grinned and grabbed her wand. She cast a hearing spell and tried to listen to what the Vikings were saying, then Harry saw her glare at the fake ear.

"They are talking in Norse." She grumbled angrily. Harry laughed. Of course they were - they weren't stupid, and English wasn't their first language, either. They were only speaking it here because of the wizards chosen language, to be polite. Harry was quite glad that they knew some, though he didn't understand how they did.

Harry said goodnight to his friends and headed to the dorms. He read one of his books and then closed it. He looked out the window and leant against the window sill. He heard something which sounded like a screech... from an animal? He saw something pass across the scarce clouds and block out the stars for a moment.

The figure passed quickly and Harry almost thought that he'd imagined it. But there it was again, though this time closer to the tower. Harry saw the creature circle the Gryffindor tower, as though looking for somewhere to land. To Harry's amazement, it landed without a sound. Harry was sure that he was imagining things, though the figure was perched on the edge of the common room balcony where the Vikings were staying. Hermione was right: they were hiding something.

### 3. Chapter 3

Hiccup had to sit at the main table, Gobber at the Gryffindor one with the rest of the Vikings. He felt so out of place, sitting next to Professor Snape and Professor Sprout. The shorter garden teacher made Hiccup feel slightly better. But the potions teacher was grim as ever. Hiccup was sure that he was plotting someone's death.

The room was alive with sound. The breakfast meal over, everyone waited for the names to be called out. Hiccup was just hoping that the people looked like they wouldn't hurt the dragons. He couldn't bear it if they were injured more than they were in the cages. It just made him feel sad.

When the Goblet was transported inside the room, everyone turned silent. Hiccup could almost hear a pin drop. Not that he'd want to, of course. The teachers all stood and Hiccup felt the need to stand as well. When they sat, he almost fell into the chair. He wasn't used to this sort of thing.

Dumbledore and Barty Crouch stepped forwards. Barty spoke about how the chosen would participate in the tournament no matter what objections they had. The Goblet was a permanent thing. What was pulled out stayed. Dumbledore waited for the Ministry member to retake his seat before he watched the flame on the Goblet.

Hiccup noticed that the flame turned into a different colour, a

bright blue, before a paper flew out of it. The flame returned to its normal colour. Dumbledore opened the singed paper and called the name out loudly. "Fleur Deleclour of Beauxbaxton."

The young girl stood up and bowed to her fellow friends from school. She headed towards the front and into the directed room. Hiccup didn't think that he had to worry too badly about her. She seemed like the kind of girl who wouldn't want to harm anyone.

The flame changed again and a rougher piece of parchment flew out. Dumbledore didn't seem surprised as he read out the name of the Durmstrung boy. "Viktor Krum." He announced clearly. The guy stood up and high fived his friends. They all beamed at him. Hiccup didn't like this one. He did look like the type to harm the dragon.

Dumbledore grabbed the last piece and read out the Hogwarts student. "Cedric Diggory." He read. The Hufflepuff beamed and stood. He seemed too much of a pretty boy to really try to fight the dragons, Hiccup thought. That was a safe one.

The three champions headed towards their designated area for speaking to. The flame changed again and it shocked everyone, including Dumbledore. Hiccup turned his head slightly to look at the teachers. Only one of them looked slightly less shocked than the others. Professor Moody, Hiccup thought his name was. He seemed slightly smug.

"Harry Potter?" Dumbledore read out quietly, shocked. Harry stood up shakily and walked forwards. Hiccup knew that this boy hadn't put his name in the Goblet. He wasn't stupid enough. He wouldn't have risked his life like this. There was something behind it. Dumbledore seemed shocked and angry. Hiccup didn't like it.

The school hall was quiet as Harry headed into the room. Hiccup followed as all the teachers followed Dumbledore to talk to Harry. How could he have entered himself into the competition? It just wasn't possible. Hiccup knew the rules were quite clear. Three champions. Not four. Never four. So why? Why? And why Harry? What was so special about that boy?

Hiccup heard Dumbledore demand an answer out of the boy. Harry hadn't entered his name into the Goblet. Hiccup didn't need to hear Harry's answer to know that he hadn't. It was obvious. What did the boy get out of doing such a tournament, anyway? Apart from nearly dying, not much.

The two other headmasters were extremely unhappy by the new entry from Hogwarts. How could Dumbledore let the student enter? But the rules were quite clear. Harry was now an official champion for the Tri Wizard Tournament. Hiccup felt bad for the boy.

Dumbledore sighed angrily and looked over to Hiccup. He pulled him aside whilst Professor Moody spoke to Harry and the other members. It was about something which had to have been really powerful to hoodwink the Goblet. Of course, Hiccup began to wonder how that guy would have known that, under such short circumstances.

Hiccup waited for Dumbledore to speak. And when he did, it was hushed and Hiccup barely heard it. "You are going to train those dragons so

that nothing happens to Harry." He warned.

The Viking shrugged. "It's not up to me." He exclaimed, but it was only light. He didn't want anything to happen to Harry almost as much as he didn't want anything to happen to the dragons. Possibly more. But he wasn't going to let Dumbledore know of this.

Dumbledore nodded his head and frowned. "Well, you'd better hope that it is. Because if something happens to Harry in this first task, it's on you." He warned in a deadly serious voice.

Hiccup held his hands up and rolled his eyes. "Right. Because clearly letting some Vikings here was the smartest thing to do. You know, we are Vikings? We can't be trusted." He smirked. This was a silly game and he knew it, but he wasn't going to let the headmaster get away with telling the chief's son what to do.

Dumbledore scowled. "You'd better hope on the lives of those dragons that you can."

Hiccup lost his smirk and scowled deeper than the headmaster. "You know, if you want me to get the dragons to attack you, all you had to do was ask." And without waiting for a reply, he left. He wasn't going to let the headmaster say anything else. He'd said enough. Threatening dragons was one sure fire way to get Hiccup to hate you. And Hiccup hated almost no one.

The great hall was empty, apart from Hiccup's friends. They were all still eating and talking about the tournament. Hiccup walked towards them and sat down, ready for something to eat. He put some fish onto a plate for the dragon back in the tower.

Astrid noticed Hiccup's scowl and knew that something had gone wrong. Of course. "What happened this time?" she asked, as though bored of Dumbledore's antics.

Hiccup frowned as he ate some bread. "Well, we have to make sure that the dragons are all extremely well behaved. If something happens to Harry the dragons all die. How is that fair? They're dragons. If you didn't want them to harm anyone, you should have prepared a different task!" he rambled.

The Vikings all sighed. Astrid looked down at the food. "Well, I suppose we should get started soon."

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. But we aren't bringing our own dragons there yet. I don't want the keepers to see them." He explained.

Everyone nodded and they finished their food quickly. Hiccup went up the stairs and told his Vikings that he would meet them in the forest. He took the fish to Toothless, who hurriedly ate them and grumbled in appreciation. Hiccup sighed and hugged the Night Fury sadly.

Toothless mumbled and pushed Hiccup towards the balcony. Hiccup sighed and shook his head. "We can't, bud. Its broad daylight. And I have something that I need to do first." Toothless groaned and shook his head angrily. He didn't like being left alone inside all day. Hiccup knew this, but there wasn't a better solution. "I'm sorry, bud. Truly. Next time you're coming with me though." He promised.

Toothless nodded his head and watched Hiccup leave the room.

Hiccup headed back down and towards the Forbidden Forest. The other Vikings were already there, talking to the dragon keepers. Hiccup noticed that Charlie Wesley was having some problems trying to feed the same Monstrous Nightmare. Couldn't they just follow Hiccup's example? The wands weren't helping.

Kingsley and Jeremy were standing with the Vikings, probably giving them instructions. Hiccup walked over to them. Kingsley immediately glared at Hiccup. He shrugged it off. "Where were you? You were supposed to be here five minutes ago." Kingsley snapped.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Oh. I didn't tell you? I'm notorious for being late. And I was with Toothless. You wouldn't like me if I hadn't been there first." He retorted.

Snickers went around the group of Vikings. Astrid punched Hiccup on the shoulder again. She had a habit of doing that and it almost annoyed Hiccup. Almost. The twins and Snotlout all snickered and started imitating what would happen if Hiccup got mad. Yeah, because they were so correct, Hiccup thought dryly.

Kingsley frowned. "I'm sure your pet cat can wait. We've got dragons that you need to help us train."

Astrid smirked but said nothing. The rest of the group, aside Hiccup, fell about laughing. Hiccup rolled his eyes. They were so mature sometimes.

"Oh, don't worry. Toothless will be coming here soon." He shrugged. The Vikings sobered quickly and waited for Hiccup to do something. "But if I am to help with these dragons, they are not to be inside their cages." He informed.

Kingsley exchanged worried glances with Jeremy. "We can't do that. They will escape. They stay in their respective cages." Kingsley said.

Hiccup sighed and nodded. "Alright. Well, let's get started gang."

Without another word, Hiccup went straight to a dragon which he'd never encounter before. The rest of the Vikings went to the more familiar of the dragon species. Except for Fishlegs, who was always eager? He went to a silky green one. Hiccup's was a thorny brown dragon.

Charlie walked over to Hiccup and stood behind him. He told Hiccup that the dragon was of the Hungarian Horntail. Hiccup didn't much like the name, but he shrugged it off. The dragon snorted and walked furiously around the cage. The confines didn't seem to be worrying him too much as he shot fire straight through the gaps of the cage.

Hiccup clicked his tongue, getting the attention. The dragon clicked his own tongue and imitated Hiccup as he bent his huge horned head to Hiccup's level. Hiccup smiled and stepped forwards. He liked the dragons which imitated the people. They were fun to train, not that he didn't like training Toothless or anything, just that these were

his favourites after Toothless.

The dragon snorted, its breath steaming out of his mouth. Hiccup reached forwards, allowing the dragon to step back if it needed to. The dragon's eyes stayed focussed on Hiccup's, making sure that the boy wasn't going to hurt him. He realised that Hiccup wouldn't and allowed him to touch his nose briefly. Hiccup smiled as he pulled his hand back. The dragon was surprised when Hiccup didn't continue to touch him. He smiled and gave him some food. The Horntail ate it speedily, eyeing off Hiccup as though asking for more.

Hiccup looked behind at Charlie, who was shocked. "That's our most dangerous dragon here." He muttered, confused and shocked. Well, all dragons were no match for Hiccup's kind ways. Well, that's what the twins said about him at least. Hiccup didn't mind either.

The young Viking merely shrugged. He had a way with the dragons. He knew that. They listened to him. He looked around to the others. They were having mild troubles with the dragons. Hiccup looked to a black dragon, who was pacing furiously. He was clearly mad. Angry. Hiccup walked over to it. Charlie explained that it was a Chinese Firebalt. Hiccup didn't know what the first word meant, but he liked the second one.

It took a while, but Hiccup went through each dragon which he didn't recognise. There was the Swedish Short Snout, which Fishlegs was next to and the Welsh Green. They were quite cool, but none compared to Toothless. Hopefully the Night fury wouldn't be too mad with Hiccup for leaving him alone and going to see other dangerous dragons.

The keepers all gave the Vikings a huge thankyou and told them that they were looking forwards to working with them soon. Hiccup could tell that they were lying. Of course they were. What dragon keepers wanted to be bested by a few Vikings who were younger than they were? None. Hiccup knew that they were jealous, but they would be more so once they saw the dragons which the Vikings rode.

Hiccup dragged behind his friends. Astrid hung back and started to talk to Hiccup. She could tell that Hiccup wasn't happy about the way the dragon keepers were acting, but there wasn't anything that she could do. Nothing seemed to cheer Hiccup up like Toothless, and she respected that, but she wished that Hiccup would talk to her as well.

"Hey, you know we are here for you, right?" Astrid said quietly.

Hiccup nodded. "I do. And I'm thankful. I am. It's just..." he trailed off sadly, looking into the forest. He didn't have the words and Astrid respected that. Hiccup was thankful that she did, but he didn't feel like talking. That's one of the things he liked about Toothless: he didn't need to talk for the dragon to understand that Hiccup needed comforting. The dragon could just tell.

Astrid sighed. "I know Hiccup. And I believe that you will tell us when you're ready. But you need to understand, we can't help if you don't tell us how."

Hiccup smiled and hugged her. His mind was on Toothless and he couldn't think of how nice the hug actually was. He really did like

Astrid - had the biggest crush on her - but his mind was racing with jumbled thoughts on the other dragons and his own. He wanted Toothless to go and see the dragons. Wanted the keepers to see his dragon. For them to realise that he wasn't completely new to this whole thing.

Astrid smiled as well. She liked Hiccup, too much for her own good. She was a strong, independent woman. She wasn't going to just let a guy walk all over her. But she got the sense that Hiccup wouldn't be the type to do so. She knew that he wasn't strong like that. He liked to let people do what they knew felt right.

Hiccup laughed and pushed her off. She blushed when she realised she'd been holding him for longer than need be. The couple spread apart and Hiccup chuckled as she walked back to the rest of the group, embarrassed. He found it funny how she could act like she had and then be all embarrassed. She was a pretty funny girl, but Hiccup loved her none the less. He got the sense that she was strong, and he liked that. He needed someone strong to handle his weaknesses, even when they weren't as dramatic as they used to be.

The group headed to their tower, generally in silence. There were a few moments when the twins would make random comments on how their exercise had been... the one where they blew up all the flags. Yeah, that one. Hiccup had laughed so hard when he'd heard of the outcome. The teachers... they hadn't been too impressed with their flags being blasted into pieces. Toughnut got most of the blame, as usual, with Roughnut playing the innocent one. But she'd been the one to actually aim, after all, she did have the head with the gas. So to speak, but also literally.

Hiccup talked to Astrid once they were back in the tower. They sat down on the couch, looking at the fire, both their dragons sleeping by it. Astrid started to add details in her own miniature copy of the Book of Dragons, except hers was one on the Deadly Nadda. Hiccup figured that they could copy some parts for the dragon keepers here to have, so that they could learn the ways of the Berk trainers. Only enough so they didn't have to cage the dragons, of course.

Fishlegs walked back into the room, followed by the patterning of a Gronkle. Hiccup took one glance at his face and knew that something was troubling him. He hopped up, startling the Night Fury and Nadda on the stone floor, and went over to the emotionally challenged Viking.

Hiccup stood next to Fishlegs, stopping him in his tracks. Meatlug thumped lazily over to where Toothless and Stormfly were, joining their little slumber party. Toothless sent Hiccup a slight glare, one that told him off for waking him up, before falling back to sleep himself.

"Hey Hiccup." Fishlegs said, his cheery smile only half present. Hiccup nodded, gesturing with his arms to explain. He didn't need to say anything, Fishlegs got the picture. "I was just thinking... There were four dragons there... we didn't know what any of them were. How many other dragon species are there that we don't know about?" he wondered curiously.

Hiccup nodded. "I don't know, Fishlegs. Maybe we'll have to look into that." He said thoughtfully. Truthfully, the thought had crossed

Hiccup's mind already. But hearing Fishlegs say it confirmed his earlier suspicions. Well, hearing the book worm of the Vikings admit that he didn't know something, it shocked Hiccup, but it intrigued him as well.

Fishlegs beamed. "Well, I'm heading off to the library. I heard from Hermione that there are some pretty great books there." he announced, loud enough for Astrid to hear as well. She shrugged her shoulders, not really caring, and Fishlegs rolled his eyes. Her lack of interest in Fishlegs' hobby was pretty funny.

Hiccup waved Fishlegs out and shook his head, smiling. He had some pretty crazy friends. The book crazy nerdy one, the one who turned to violence, the vein one, and the two who liked to blow everything up. It was pretty silly, but Hiccup liked how all his friends were different, yet they still managed to get along.

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><p>Harry kept to his room for most of the day. Dumbledore had given the champions the day off, and that included him. He still couldn't believe it. He didn't know whether he was happy or sad, worried or overjoyed. He was definitely worried. Which of the champions wasn't? Well, maybe not Viktor, he seemed pretty mad to be going against the fourteen year old boy, but it wasn't Harry's fault. He wished that Ron could see that. They'd had a bit of a falling out, just because Ron was jealous.</p>

The school was still alive with activity, classes still running, nothing seemed to have stopped. None of the students seemed to really care that one of the more 'important' of the students had been selected for the tournament. Harry thought that it was incredibly suspicious that he was put into it, but he wasn't going to say anything. He didn't have a chance.

Harry walked out of the Gryffindor dorm and almost bumped into someone. He apologised quickly, before looking up at who it was. It was one of the Vikings, Fishlegs. Harry remembered him from the times that he'd met him. Hermione had taken a certain liking to him, apparently he was into books as well.

"Oh, sorry, Harry. I didn't see you there." Fishlegs muttered quickly.

Harry shook his head and shrugged. "That's all fine, Fishlegs. Where are you off to, anyway?" he asked. He wanted to know where they snuck off during the day, it was curious that they were never there when they had classes. They obviously didn't have their own classes... so what was it that they were doing?

Fishlegs looked down and twiddled with his fingers. Whatever he was going to say, Harry could tell that it was embarrassing him. "To the library. Though I admit... I don't know where it is." he said sheepishly.

Harry rolled his eyes and smiled. "I'll show you the way. Come on." He said happily. That would give him something to do. Something to keep his mind off the impending doom. The first task was still at least a month away, but that didn't make Harry any less nervous. He would have to start preparing... but how do you prepare for a task

you haven't got a clue as to what the objective is?

Fishlegs walked closely to Harry as they headed around the numerous corridors, all looking similar, to the library. Harry had spent ages roaming the halls with his invisibility cloak, not that he told anyone, and knew most pathways and secret ones. Of course, having a map which provided such things made it that much easier.

Harry couldn't help it, after a while of walking with the Viking, his mind instantly wandered over to Hiccup. He was an odd character, full of spirit, yet not showing much, hiding himself away to the world. Harry could tell that it was only his friends which really knew him, and maybe not even them. Hiccup was just a strange one, one in which Harry didn't know if he liked or not. Of course, he liked Hiccup, as a person, but he didn't know whether he liked him as a friend. Did Hiccup even want friends?

Fishlegs started muttering to himself in Norse and Harry found himself curious. Who wouldn't? Learning a new language, or just hearing it, could be pretty exciting. He found himself speaking up, making Fishlegs snap his head towards him and blush slightly.

"Oh, it's nothing, don't worry Harry." Fishlegs hurriedly said, but Harry could tell that something was bothering him. It was just a matter of what.

Harry nodded slowly, his eyes looking at a painting in front of them. "I wasn't. I was just curious." Harry said lightly. He wanted to have a conversation. Something which could take his mind off everything. The tournament, the Vikings, Voldemort. There were so many things which could go wrong and that most likely would go wrong...

Fishlegs rolled his eyes and smiled. "Well, you wouldn't understand anyway. It has to do with our friends." He explained, his tone implying something which only they would understand.

Harry wondered what they were hiding. Fishlegs was in on it, that much was obvious. Maybe all Hermione needed to do was to talk to Fishlegs... he seemed the gullible type, one to talk under stressful situations. Not that that was a good trait to have, but Fishlegs seemed to have it.

The rest of the walk was silent. Harry's mind wandered over several things, all ending back with the numerous questions that he had for the Vikings. Namely one of them, of course, being Hiccup. He was so small, yet he seemed strong. There was just something about him that Harry admired. The way that he stood up to Malfoy was pretty cool, however worried he might have been for the small boy. Hiccup couldn't have been much older than Harry, yet Harry got the sense that he'd already been through more than a fair share of fights, maybe seen some deaths.

After a while, they reached the library. Fishlegs thanked Harry and headed inside, mumbling to himself happily in his own language. Harry chuckled to himself and strolled back to the dormitory. On his way, he changed his mind, as young boys generally do. He headed into the courtyard, near the entrance of the school, and sat by one of the benches on the stone floor, leaning against the pillars.

Harry looked up at the numerous turrets surrounding the school, the

Gryffindor tower being amongst them. He wondered what the Vikings were doing during the school hours. Surely, they would tell the school students eventually, but Harry didn't want to have to wait for the information. He wanted to know now... but how would he? He couldn't very well just ask them what they were doing here at Hogwarts. They might be doing something for the tournament â€“ undoubtedly â€“ and couldn't tell Harry because he was one of the four champions.

That made Harry's thoughts stutter to a halt. He was one of the champions. Not only would he have the chance of a lifetime to compete, he was with three other people. His chances were pretty slim at winning, let alone surviving. Hopefully the challenges wouldn't be too hard.

Harry sighed as he looked up to the bright blue sky. There weren't very many clouds dotted along them, but there were a few over different parts of the school. Harry blinked as he saw a black shape dart quickly through the sky, sure that he was imagining things. He heard a whistling sound as it came back and he knew he wasn't dreaming. Harry stood up and tried to catch another glimpse of the black creature, but it was too late, it was gone. Harry grumbled as he sat back down on the stone floor.

With his mind creating worst case scenarios, Harry almost missed the shape flying back over the school. Did Dumbledore know that there was something black in the school? A huge shape, creature was inside the protective boundaries. Surely Dumbledore would have known that. But, nothing came to stop the black creature. It seemed to circle the Gryffindor Turret before disappearing around the side. Harry rolled his eyes. Now he knew he was seeing things. His thoughts were focussing on the Vikings so much that he was imagining them having creatures, massive black ones. That just wouldn't happen. Even the wizards wouldn't see that sort of thing every day.

Harry's mind went to Voldemort. Maybe the Vikings weren't here solely for Dumbledore. Maybe they were also here because of Voldemort. Maybe they were working for him, to somehow manage to bring him back to his former self. Harry paled at that thought. But Hiccup didn't seem like the type to do such a thing. He didn't look like the sort of boy who could kill anything. He was just a twig, no muscle and no weight. He was short, but he was also pretty cute, in the sense where he was small.

Standing up, Harry decided to go back to the dorm. It was almost lunchtime and he needed to put his robes back on. He couldn't go for lunch without them on, it was against school policy. The only reason he'd been allowed to take them off was to show that he wasn't supposed to be in class. That rarely happened anyway.

On his way to the tower, Harry ran into someone. They were still outside, in the courtyard â€“ Harry hadn't walked very far. Harry glanced at the person as he apologised, only slightly shocked to see that it was Hiccup. He looked far more shocked than Harry did, but he covered it up quickly, making Harry wonder.

"Oh, hey Hiccup." Harry said, smiling fondly.

Hiccup waved slightly. He looked awkward, slightly shorter than Harry. "You were out here this whole time?" he asked, slightly

nervous.

Harry shrugged and nodded. "Yeah. Well, I don't have to go to class today. Privileges and such of being a champion."

At the mention of champions, Hiccup scowled briefly, before smiling and nodding, as though nothing was wrong. Harry knew that something was wrong now. "Oh. Well, as much as I'd love to stay and chat... I have somewhere I need to be." He said slowly.

Harry nodded and watched the one legged boy limp slightly away and out of the school. Harry was about to turn and go back to the tower when he saw Hiccup stop. The Viking looked directly up at the Gryffindor tower, before shaking his head and walking away. Whatever that was, Harry was sure that it wasn't a bad thing. It couldn't. Hiccup didn't seem like the type to be mean.

Shaking his head, Harry speedily headed towards the tower. Things were getting a bit too strange for his liking. He wanted to know all about the Vikings, but at the same time, he respected their privacy. He couldn't just ask them why there was a huge black shape in their part of the tower.

The classes ended just as Harry reached the tower. He quickly changed into his robes and then headed to the hall, awaiting the arrival of his two friends. When Ron just walked straight past Harry, he sighed. Of course he would be like that. It wasn't his fault he'd been entered in the competition. He'd been entered by someone else for some reason or another. But Harry just couldn't tell Ron, he'd never believe his own best friend. What did that tell him about his friends? He hoped that Hermione wasn't too mad either. They had had a bit of a fight before.

Hermione joined Harry and smiled. She sat next to Hiccup and Harry, with Ginny Weasley on the other side. They'd become pretty good friends recently. Harry wondered what it was about Ginny, but then, she was pretty cute. And she was only a year younger than they were...

Hiccup started to talk to his own friends, so Harry decided that now wasn't the time for answers. He turned to Hermione, who looked like she wanted to ask something. Harry sighed and gave her the pointed glance that told her to share.

"I was over hearing something in the courtyard this morning... it was about you being one of the champions." She whispered to Harry.

He sighed and nodded his head slowly. "I figured something like this would come up eventually." He admitted. It was more to himself than to others, but he still felt the need to say it.

Hermione nodded and smiled sadly. She gave Harry a comforting look and put her hand on his shoulder. "Harry, you're a great wizard. You'll be fine in the Tasks." Harry noticed that Hiccup snapped his head up at the mention of the Task, but didn't look over.

Harry sighed again, this time deeper. "I know that you think that... but, Hermione, I don't know if I can. I can't use many spells and the Tasks are going to be extremely difficult." Harry noticed Hiccup's heavy sigh, which had nothing to do with their own conversation.

Ron turned in his seat, three people away from Harry, and called across to him. "Hey, Harry, how's it feel to be a Champion?" it was angry and Harry decided it was best to just say nothing.

Hermione sent Ron a glare before snapping, "Leave him out of it, Ron."

Ron laughed and turned back to his twin brothers. Harry sighed and looked down, playing with his food. He didn't particularly feel like eating anything. He was too nervous, and the first Task wasn't for at least a month. That meant that he could get very skinny during that month. He needed to do something to calm those nerves.

A new voice joined the conversation, shocking Harry to no extent. "Don't listen to him, Harry. I'm sure that you'll do fine." Hiccup said.

Harry snapped his head towards the young Viking, catching his comforting smile. Harry had to smile back. How could he not, when it was such an irresistible smile to resist. Hermione nudged Harry briefly and she laughed. Harry rolled his eyes and said, "Thanks, Hiccup. But I don't know. I don't even know what the first task is, let alone how I can prepare for it."

Hiccup rolled his eyes and chuckled slightly. "Yeah, well. You won't need much, I can assure you on that." Then he looked to his friends for a moment. Astrid gave him the go ahead look and he nodded to her. "You know what always calms my nerves down? Going for a fly." And then he turned back to his friends, leaving Harry wondering what the heck he was talking about.

Lunch ended and Harry sighed. Maybe Hiccup had a point though. Being on his broomstick in the air always cheered him up. It was a shame that the Quidditch cup couldn't be held this year. Stupid Tri Wizard Tournament. He still couldn't believe that he had somehow entered the tournament.

An idea hit Harry and he decided to head down to see Hagrid. He was one of his oldest friends, the one who had told Harry of the existence of wizards, taken him away from his horrible family in the Muggle world. Hagrid had a thing for strange magical creatures, dragons and screwts to name a couple of the more dangerous ones, but he was still a pretty cool friend.

Harry stalked away from Ron, who barely got the chance to glare at him. He started to cheer up as he headed towards the path down to Hagrid's hut. It was near the edge of the forbidden forest, making it easier for him to go about his jobs inside it. And it also helped because Hagrid himself wasn't allowed to actually do magic. That was for the wizards who weren't expelled. But that was a story for another time.

The hut had a plume of smoke rising from the chimney steadily, informing Harry that Hagrid was in fact home. He knocked on the wooden door and heard the sounds of a heavy man walking towards it. He waved to Hagrid as he opened the door and engulfed Harry into a tight hug.

"Harry, m'boy!" Hagrid greeted the wizard.

Harry laughed and hugged him back, before getting put back onto his own feet. "Hello Hagrid. How's things?" he asked, genuinely interested. He loved to learn about his life, if only because of how dangerous it could be. He remembered how he'd once been given a dragon egg... that hadn't ended too well. The little Norwegian Ridgeback had grown too quickly to keep up with Hagrid, and the ministry had been notified, the little dragon had been taken away and Hagrid had never really been the same since. He'd been crazier, going after even more deadly creatures.

Hagrid laughed and headed back inside. "I'm pretty good. I hear you've been entered into the tournament?" Hagrid asked, even though he knew the answer. Everyone in school did. Everyone in the wizarding world knew that Harry was entered as one the four champions. Besides, Hagrid had been there to witness the names being pulled out of the goblet.

Harry rolled his eyes. "I know. I don't even know... what am I supposed to do?" he asked, his voice shaking slightly. He was nervous... the task was ages away, yet he knew nothing of what he could do to prepare for it, to help his chances of surviving through it.

Hagrid nodded slowly. "Harry, between you and me, I don't think that you will need to do much. There's something in action to... help..." he drawled.

Harry gave him a questioning glance. It told him to spill. But Hagrid held firm... for once. Harry had to admit, he was quite proud of Hagrid for not spilling everything. He usually did.

The door opened and Harry turned his head. He was shocked to see two Vikings standing at the door. It was Hiccup and Astrid, they were both standing there as though they owned the place. Well, fair enough, seeing as they were here on some sort of business, but not from Hagrid. What were they here for, anyway?

"Ah, Hiccup. What a pleasure it is to see you again." Hagrid greeted calmly, although it was excited which wasn't unusual for Hagrid.

Hiccup beamed and stepped into the room, his metal leg barley missing the step on the door. Astrid followed behind him and they sat down in front of the fire. Hagrid gave them something to drink as they sat.

"What brings you lot here today?" Hagrid asked cheerfully, unaware of how tense the room actually was. Harry could feel it, the feeling that he shouldn't be there. The feeling that Hiccup didn't want him there. That hurt more than he thought that it would.

Hiccup suddenly decided to smile. "We were just coming to see how you were doing. We didn't see you earlier and thought that something might be up. Charlie didn't think that you would deliberately miss that." He replied cheerfully. Astrid gave the Viking a scornful look before looking at Hagrid too.

Hagrid looked away for a moment, his eyes sort of sad. "Something came up. But I won't miss it again... I couldn't." he said

forcefully, his accent making it difficult for Harry to understand, as per usual. The Vikings didn't seem to have any difficulties with it, of course, being so similar to their own.

Hiccup nodded happily. "Of course. Tomorrow we're going to be bringing more though." He said, giving Hagrid the knowing look. This made Harry angry. They were obviously leaving him in the dark. He noticed Hiccup sending him a sly glance, one that told him to ask later. So the Viking knew. He knew. Harry didn't know whether to be happy or not... he'd have to tell Hermione.

At this, Hagrid's head perked up and he beamed, one of the happiest that Harry had seen him in a long time. "Really? Oh, I'll be there! Oh, this is going to be great!" he cheered happily. Harry rolled his eyes at his giant friend and leant back against his chair.

Hiccup chuckled softly and glanced at Harry. "He's been waiting to meet our friends for quite some time now." He chuckled.

Astrid elbowed Hiccup in the ribs and he breathed heavily. Harry hoped that he was alright, not knowing how much pain tolerance the small Viking could have. Surely more than Harry himself, but he couldn't be sure. Hiccup glared at Astrid as she smirked down at his cramped position. She sent him a knowing glance though, and Harry wondered what Hiccup had done wrong.

"Will we be meeting your friends?" Harry asked.

Astrid smirked and sent Hiccup the world famous you got yourself into this mess, you get yourself out look. Hiccup sighed and looked back up at Harry. "Well, yeah. I guess... probably later though. I wouldn't want them to scare you..." he said, making Harry wonder how bad their friends could be that they were hiding them from the Slytherin.

Harry decided that it was time to head back. He stood up and thanked Hagrid for letting him stay. Hiccup waved good bye, with Astrid barely glancing up from her position staring at the fire. Harry rolled his eyes as he headed out the door and back to the castle.

As he was walking, Harry glanced up at the turrets of the school. A habit he found himself doing frequently recently. As he moved his eyes over the Gryffindor turret, he could have sworn that he saw a black thing look in his direction and then head inside... but his eye sight wasn't that great, hence the glasses. He sighed, shook his head, and focussed his mind on the tasks ahead. Like not dying.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup couldn't stop laughing. Astrid rolled her eyes and told him to shut up or she'd... well, she'd give him a good punch. Toothless growled at her threateningly and she held her hands up, but the smirk told all of them that she didn't' really care. Which was fair enough...</p>

The twins walked into the common room and seemed quite pleased with themselves. Hiccup stopped laughing for a moment to ask what they were so happy about. They instantly gave another reason for the one legged Viking to resume laughing.

"We were hanging out with that Ron boy's brothers." Roughnut explained.

Roughnut snickered. "Yeah. They're totally like us."

"But they make people sick..."

"Instead of blowing them up." Roughnut finished.

Hiccup clutched his stomach as he wiped a tear from his eyes. Astrid rolled her eyes and punched him in the shoulder. He blinked rapidly and glared up at her. She gave him an innocent look, received by a sharp growl from the Night Fury. She didn't even bother to apologise. Hiccup glared at her.

Fishlegs entered the room with a serious face. Hiccup knew that he'd been at the library again. He seemed to be there a lot recently. "I just saw Harry. He's looking for you, Hiccup."

Hiccup chuckled to himself, his earlier laughter rising back to the surface. A glare from Astrid and a glance from Toothless quickly shut him up. "Oh. Yeah. I kind of... maybe... let him know a bit about our dragons..." he said slowly.

Fishlegs dropped the books that he was holding in shock. "You did what!?" he asked, shocked. Of all the people, Hiccup wouldn't be the one to betray their trust. That was the twins or Snotlout's job.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. Toothless stood in front of him protectively and grumbled at the other teens in the room. "Not really. I just let him know that we were definitely hiding something. He doesn't know anything other than that. And besides... he's not really smart enough to figure out about the dragons." He remarked, defending his honour.

Fishlegs nodded and calmed down, reaching down to pick up his books. "That's better. Anyway, I was looking for some facts on their dragons... you'll never guess what, Hiccup."

"What?" he asked, slightly curious?

"They have some history on Berk. More to the point, they have history on our dragon killing ways..." He said the last part quietly so that the dragons in the room wouldn't get upset. Toothless didn't mind, because his rider had never killed a dragon. Couldn't, he was too small. Toothless didn't know whether to be happy or not about it. But the other dragons were sensitive.

Hiccup nodded slowly. "What's it say, Fishlegs?"

He rolled his eyes. "Not much, actually. Just that we killed them. In fact, it says nothing about how we don't any more, which I find strange..."

Hiccup nodded, catching on. "How did Dumbledore know that we don't kill them anymore?"

Hiccup sat in the common room for most of the next day. He wasn't interested in facing anyone. He wanted to stay inside with his best friend and be left alone. Toothless was all for the idea and helped push the other Vikings out of the room. They had all taken their dragons down to the Forbidden Forest where they would be meeting the keepers to discuss the first task. Hiccup didn't think he needed to be down there to help them, they could handle the dragons on their own.

Toothless grumbled as he shifted his weight, making Hiccup lose his concentration. He laughed and scratched the Night Fury behind his ears on his neck, making him purr slightly and fall to the ground as he moved his hand to the dragon's chin. Hiccup laughed as he watched the ferocious dragon lay happily on the ground, vulnerable and cute.

Hiccup leaned against the dragon and sighed unhappily. Everything they had worked for on Berk was slipping through the gaps. Fishlegs had raised a fair point too, which made Hiccup wonder. The book nerd Viking was pretty clever with things such as facts, but when he didn't know something and couldn't find the answer, it meant there was something that needed to be investigated. So that was what Fishlegs would be doing when he wasn't needed with the dragons.

Toothless sat upright and shot a plasma blast at the fire, instantly creating flames which spread over the logs. Hiccup leaned against his wing and looked at the roof. Toothless turned his scaly head towards the Viking boy and gave him a curious look, to which Hiccup smiled.

"I don't know what to do, bud," Hiccup said softly.

The dragon nudged his shoulder lightly, earning a small chuckle from his Viking. He didn't want anything to happen to his rider just as much as Hiccup didn't want anything happen to Toothless. He was still slightly angry that Hiccup hadn't let him go meet the other dragons - especially since there was one he would know - but he knew Hiccup would take him when he was ready. Toothless could wait for Hiccup forever, as long as he got his way \_eventually\_.

Hiccup moved his metal leg to look at it sadly. Toothless brought his tail around Hiccup, to remind him of what was there. Or what was \_not\_ there, as the case may be, because Hiccup had taken off the saddle, and, in turn, the red tailfin.

The metal leg was a strong reminder of the lengths that Toothless would go to save him. The lost limb for the dragon was a harsh reminder that they used to be enemiesâ€¦that Hiccup had wanted to kill Toothless, to be known throughout the village for \_that\_ instead of uniting the Vikings and dragons.

Hiccup tapped his prosthetic leg and heard the satisfying \_ting\_ of the metal. Toothless grumbled, strongly disliking the sound. Hiccup did it once more, for good measure, earning him a hard shove in the side. Hiccup laughed as he was pushed away from the dragon and onto the cold stone floor. He looked up to see a very smug dragon. He rolled his eyes and sat up straight, recovering his former position against the dragon's side.

Toothless put his head on the ground and breathed heavily. Hiccup chuckled to himself as he leaned against the cool scales of the near black but blue dragon. The wing shifted slightly and Hiccup readjusted his position so they would both be comfortable.

Hiccup pulled out his notepad and started to write. He was making a log of the dragons they were training, to see if the ones belonging to the wizarding world were any different from their own kind. It had been Fishlegs' idea, of course, and only he and Hiccup were following through with the idea. Hiccup had taken up training the most deadly of the dragons, the Hungarian Horntail, because he was the dragon the keepers would never go near. They were so scared of him that Hiccup couldn't help but laugh.

Fishlegs was taking notes and training the Swedish Short Snout, with Astrid on the Welsh Green and the twins and Snotlout working with the Chinese Firebolt. The twins were extremely happy to be working with said dragon because she was notorious for shooting flames all over the camp site.

Hiccup read through his previous notes, which were brief and little, but he'd made more of a start than the others had. They weren't taking it seriously because they didn't really care about the details and advantages of understanding new dragon species. They were all action and no thinking, especially Snotlout.

Toothless looked over Hiccup's shoulder at the sketches he'd already drawn of the Hungarian Horntail. He was a pretty deadly looking dragon, all green with the spikes lining his body. He looked like a deadlier version of the Deadly Nadder. His neck was longer and thinner, with razor sharp wings and a bad attitude. He wasn't the nicest dragon, and his first encounter with Hiccup had been a one off. Hiccup couldn't get close anymore, without fear of losing his other leg. None of the keepers dared to enter his space either, knowing full well that if Hiccup couldn't, they didn't stand a chance. It was Hiccup's job to train that dragon yet he was struggling. Really, the dragon was a nightmare to work with. He kept on shooting fire everywhere, not caring who or what it hit, thumping around in the cage, threatening the lives of everyone who went near it, including the other dragons.

"This dragon is even worse than you were, bud." Hiccup stated, giving Toothless a teasing grin. He grumbled slightly and looked cautiously at the dragon, as though assessing how much of a threat it posed. He snorted and gave Hiccup a slight glare, warning him not to go near the dragon again.

Toothless shook his scales and Hiccup gently patted his wing, scratching where his scales were dry. The dragon grumbled happily, purring in appreciation. The little one legged boy smiled fondly at his best friend as he continued to act like the baby that he was.

Hiccup added another note about how the Hungarian Horntail ate eels. There was only one other known dragon that had an odd diet preference and that was the Typhoomerang, a totally new dragon that Hiccup probably wouldn't have met if it hadn't been for the little baby one.

Toothless looked over Hiccup's words and grumbled lowly, baring his teeth slightly. Hiccup gently laid a hand on his nose, settling him down almost instantly. The dragon still wasn't pleased that his best friend was putting his life in danger by being around a dangerous dragon, he didn't need to know that the dragon didn't like Hiccup at all.

"It's alright, bud. I won't let him hurt me," Hiccup assured the dragon. Toothless didn't feel reassured, though. He wanted to meet this dragon, just to make the rules clear. This dragon wasn't going to be messing around with his Hiccup. Not if Toothless had something to say about it.

Hiccup closed his notebook and grabbed his other sketch pad. This one consisted of designs for Toothless' tail among other things. It was his most worn out book, having some drawings of machines that Hiccup had designed before he'd met the dragon, including the one he'd used to shoot down the Night Fury. That was one of the first machines to actually work, and he was conflicted as to whether he was happy or not that it did.

Toothless stood up and Hiccup fell back, causing the dragon to laugh in his face. Toothless shifted himself so he was looking directly over Hiccup's shoulder, to see what he was drawing. By the looks of it, Hiccup was sketching some sort of dragon lead. Toothless looked at Hiccup warily. The measurements were all wrong to be of use for Toothless, and the Night Fury knew that Hiccup wouldn't put him on the leash. He was smarter than that.

Hiccup noticed Toothless' curious glance and chuckled slightly. "It's for the Hungarian Horntail. Maybe we could fly him together...maybe after he stretches his wings he might be alright to train," he was very optimistic, Toothless knew this, but it wasn't one of the worst ideas that the Viking had come up with.

Toothless went back to watching him draw the plan. It wasn't very detailed, with Hiccup not knowing many of the materials that would be strong enough to hold the dragon back. Hiccup sighed and closed the book, pressing his fingers to his temple as he relaxed his mind. Toothless nudged him slightly and he hugged his best friend.

"Thanks, bud. I'm sorry. I know this must be really stressful for you," Hiccup stared into Toothless' eyes as he said this. Toothless gave him his famous 'are you kidding me?' glance and Hiccup shrugged it off. He wasn't in the mood for Toothless' constant sarcasm, especially when it was at his expense.

Hiccup sighed and looked around the room. "We really need to get this place in some sort of order, there are things everywhere," he exclaimed. Being Vikings, they weren't the neatest of people; they didn't have time to bother with that sort of thing. Hiccup knew that being clean was a rarity amongst his house, and amongst his friends. Astrid sometimes tried, but usually gave up very quickly.

Toothless grumbled to himself as he nudged Hiccup in the back. Hiccup spun around to face him, seeing the cute little eyes and the sad face on his best friend. Hiccup rolled his eyes and hugged him before putting a couple more logs onto the fire. Toothless sat on his back legs and watched Hiccup with fascination. He tended to do that, which

used to creep Hiccup out, but he was used to it now. Now it was strange if he didn't watch Hiccup's every move.

Once Hiccup was satisfied with his area of the common room (he arranged the couch and pulled the blankets over it for his bed), he walked to the balcony. Toothless followed softly behind and made a gentle sound from his throat, staring at the sky wistfully. Hiccup sighed and shook his head, more to himself than to the dragon.

"Later. We can't go during the day. Harry almost saw us yesterday...that could have been disastrous," he said. Toothless gurgled in acknowledgement and Hiccup smiled, giving him a scratch behind the ears. He still couldn't believe they had been so careless as to fly around the school when there could have been people on the grounds, the thought just hadn't occurred to him at all. When he'd seen Harry outside of the rooms, it had given him a bit of a start.

The door to the common room opened loudly and Hiccup spun around to see who had entered. Astrid stood there with her hands on her hips, smirking at Hiccup. He sighed and pushed himself away from the edge. He walked towards her, smiling slightly.

Astrid opened the door wider and the Deadly Nadder walked through the door. Stormfly croaked before scattering towards the fire, curling into a small ball and closing her eyes. Whatever they'd been doing with the keepers had tired her out, obviously. Toothless glanced at her, conflicted about following his Viking or the dragon.

"You should have seen their faces!" Astrid couldn't keep a straight face, falling into a fit of laughter.

Hiccup looked over at his shoulder, seeing Toothless decide that he should spend some more time with Hiccup. He strolled over on his back legs, his wings casually hanging at his sides, his front legs held in front of him daintily.

"What happened?" Hiccup asked, wanting the details. He wanted to be there, but at the same time he had enjoyed the time with his dragon.

Astrid straightened up and looked at Hiccup. Her cheeks were flushed with laughter, her eyes shining a brilliant blue. Hiccup thought that she looked adorable. "Well, it was really Gobber's idea...but he said we should fly our dragons in...to see their reaction," she paused for a moment, lapsing into another fit of giggles. Hiccup rolled his eyes and sent Toothless a look. He returned it, knowing they both thought that Astrid was crazy.

After a moment, the tough Viking girl continued, "So we hopped onto them at the forest edgeâ€¦I swear Charlie Weasley peed a little when he saw us! It was the funniest thing I've seen in a long time!" she exclaimed, falling back over to have another laugh, obviously remembering the hilarious encounter with the so-called 'dragon keepers'.

Hiccup exchanged another look with Toothless. This one was more an 'is she serious?' kind of look. That was the sort of thing the twins would talk about and laugh over for days, not the sort of thing

Astrid would make a fuss over. She was usually the level headed one out of their little group. It must have been pretty funny for Astrid to be this excited over it.

A while later, Astrid recovered. She looked up at Hiccup from her sitting position on the ground. "Anyway, Harry and Hermione are looking for you," she said in her regular voice.

Hiccup gasped slightly, looking slightly concerned. Astrid missed it, but Toothless didn't. He nudged Hiccup slightly, giving him a comforting look. He knew what was going on, Hiccup had told him. It had been bothering him all morning and Toothless had caught on and pressured it out of him. Not that it had been that hard, really. Hiccup found it hard to keep his frustrations private.

Hiccup held onto Toothless for a moment, before sighing. "I'll be back, bud. Then we're going to go and see that dragon..." he sighed resentfully at the thought of the Hungarian Horntail. Luck wasn't on his side with that dragon. Toothless growled at the mention of the other dragon and bared his teeth slightly. Hiccup rolled his eyes and stepped around him.

Astrid held onto Hiccup's hand for a moment, making him turn. She smiled as she said, "We named the dragons. The new ones, at least. And yours? He's really mad," she added, watching Hiccup shiver. "The Swedish Short Snout, Fishlegs called her Moon Finger. My Welsh Green is Grass Glow and, no surprise, the twins named theirs Fire Starter. Snotlout named yours for you," she smirked at Hiccup knowingly as he groaned. "Razor Neck." And the names just got worse.

Hiccup had to try to keep a straight face. Astrid's dragon was slightly strangely named, but the others...they were just bizarre. He understood why the twins would call the fire starting dragon Fire Starter, but that was predictable and boring. Couldn't they think of something original? Then again, it wouldn't be like they would see the dragons much after the first task anyway. They would leave and never see these pitiful wizards again.

Just before he was out the door, Hiccup paused. "Hey, Astrid?" he asked cautiously.

She looked at him, curious. "Yeah?"

"Would you be able to ask the keepers if they have any material that would be strong enough to use as a...leash?" he asked warily, hating to have to resort to such measures. He didn't believe in keeping dragons against their will, but in Razor Neck's case, he had to make an exception.

She nodded slowly, looking between him and the Night Fury. "For Toothless?" she asked, slightly concerned.

Hiccup quickly shook his head, making sure that Toothless saw as well. "NO! Of course not! It's for Razor Neck. I think he just needs to have a fly around...it would be safer for all of us with Toothless around," he hurried to explain. Gosh, he wasn't going to use any sort of restraints for his dragon. Toothless didn't need them, nor should he have them anyway. He was a good dragon.

Astrid relaxed slightly. "Yeah, sure, I can do that. Now you go and find Harry and Hermione. They'll probably be in the great hall since classes are finished," she said.

Hiccup glanced up. "That late already? I promised Hagrid he'd get to meet Toothless todayâ€“, " he sighed.

Astrid rolled her eyes and looked over at Toothless. He gave her a gummy smile and turned to Hiccup. The Vikings both laughed at the silly dragon. "I'm sure they won't mind if you go in later. I believe they need to feed Razor Neck," she added with a smirk.

Hiccup blanched. He did not want to deal with that dragon anytime soon. Toothless picked up on his sour mood and purred loudly. He smiled and announced he would be back later. Astrid waved good bye and Toothless watched him leave the room, following his every movement until he closed the door. Hiccup rolled his eyes as he heard the dragon's sad moaning from behind the door. He headed straight down the stairs and towards the great hall, hoping all the wizards weren't there. If he could just have a conversation with Harry and Hermione in private, it would be better for everyone.

\* \* \*

><p>After walking around the school for a while, Hiccup finally found the great hall. He never had been good at remembering his way around places which was why he tended to rely on maps. However, he hadn't been provided with one for the school so he would just have to make do.</p>

Hiccup found Harry and Hermione deep in conversation at the head of the Gryffindor table. Much to Hiccup's annoyance, Malfoy and his goons sat on the table next to them, lost in their own world. Hiccup headed to his two friends â€“ if he could call them that â€“ and sat down opposite the pair. They looked at him and beamed, extending their conversation to him.

Hermione was talking about how Harry should get ready for all sorts of things that the first task could throw at them. Harry looked pretty nervous, though the task wasn't for another month or so. He shouldn't have been stressing, it was Hiccup that had the real challenge. He had the nightmare task of training and getting that beast of a dragon to behave and tone down the aggression.

"Do you have any ideas as to what the first task could be?" Hermione asked Hiccup suddenly.

He shook his head slowly, his eyes betraying his answer. How could he lie? These were people who liked him enough to talk to him, and he kept on keeping secrets. Maybe he could give drop some hints...or maybe he shouldn't. It was against the rules for him to tell anyone the contents of a task. Then again, Hiccup wasn't a wizard so maybe those rules didn't apply to him.

"Only a hunch," at least that wasn't a complete lie.

Hermione and Harry exchanged excited glances. "Care to share?" she asked.

Hiccup shrugged. "It's not something that I can tell you. You're not

supposed to tell the champions what the first task is or what it contains," he said.

They both sighed and nodded, understanding why he wasn't saying anything. After a moment of thoughtful silence, Harry abruptly changed the topic. "So, what's your home like, anyway?" he asked.

Hiccup perked up. "It's cold. The type of climate that will give you frostbite on your spleen," he laughed at their horrified expressions. "My village is sturdy. Berk is pretty old but every single building is new. We have fishing, hunting and a charming view of the sunsets," he explained.

Harry nodded slowly, trying to picture it. "Sounds nice."

Hiccup laughed. "It's really not. It snows nine months of the year and hails the other three." He didn't dislike the cold, it was more that he didn't like the hail. Sometimes that hail could knock someone off their dragon - which had never happened to Hiccup - and Snotlout had firsthand experience with the dangers of flying in hail.

The two wizards looked at each other before looking worriedly back at Hiccup. "It sounds dangerous. Where about \_is\_ Berk, anyway?" Hermione asked curiously.

Hiccup paused for a moment. "Well, its twelve days north of Hopeless and a few degrees south of Freezing to Death. Located solidly on the Meridian of Misery but I think that's just a saying, I've never come across a place called Freezing to Death or Hopeless. It's just something we Vikings like to say," he chuckled to himself.

Hermione looked thoughtful. "Do you have any pets?"

Hiccup smiled inwardly at this one. Well, if you could count fire breathing dragons as pets, then yes. Some Vikings did consider them pets, but Hiccup liked to think of Toothless as nothing less than his best friend. "Well, sort of," he said slowly.

Harry wanted to ask more, Hiccup could see it in his eyes, but something held him back. Instead, he said, "What kinds of animals do you have?"

This made Hiccup chuckle again. "I have a giant lizard - he's huge - others have smaller lizards, one has sheep but we don't like to talk about him," he shivered at the thought of Mildew. He was the definition of a horrible Viking, with his constant death wish for all the dragons.

Hermione nodded slowly. "Wow, I've never heard of a giant lizard before."

Hiccup snickered to himself. Boy, were they in for a shock if they ever met Toothless. That wasn't something Hiccup wanted to miss - they would probably drop dead from shock or something.

Someone walked up behind Hiccup and he sensed the anger in the person's stance. Harry's face hardened too, which prompted Hiccup to turn around. It surprised him to see it was a positively seething Ron.

Harry stood up so he wasn't below Ron. They had a tough stare off, which neither of them really won and wasted some time.

"Spending your time with the Vikings now? Trying to see if they can give you any pointers?" Ron spat harshly, making Hiccup flinch.

He tried to interject before Harry could, but the other boy was quicker. "Yes, because he is totally going to help me get famous," he snapped.

Ron glared at Harry harshly. "Either that or helping you prepare for your next interview," he retorted.

Harry rolled his eyes and resumed his glare. "For the last time Ron, she made everything up!" he yelled.

Ron glared at him full force. "Sure, sure, because I believe the little liar who wouldn't admit to putting his name in the Goblet."

"I didn't put my name in that Goblet, someone else did. Do you really think I would want to put my life at risk for money and fame?" Harry asked rhetorically.

Ron shrugged stiffly. "Who knows?" he spat.

"Because being the boy who lived isn't famous enough!" Harry angrily said.

Ron shrugged once more. "I wouldn't know. I'm not the liar here. Believe what you want, Harry."

Hiccup stood there watching the two angrily exchange words. They were clearly in a rough spot. It reminded him of the time he'd been angry with Astrid for no apparent reason. She wasn't exactly in the best of sorts for a while and they didn't talk. Of course, Toothless was loving it, but Hiccup felt constant guilt. What kind of friend would he be if he didn't feel slightly bad to be avoiding the other?

Hiccup stood up and darted around Ron. "As fun as this isn't, I have somewhere else to be," he didn't stick around long enough for them to reply.

Without warning, Hiccup tripped over something and landed heavily on his stomach. He groaned as he looked up, seeing a smirking Malfoy looking down at him. He grumbled to himself as he pushed himself up. Malfoy stood up and was instantly flanked by his two goons. Hiccup scowled at them both.

"Enjoy your trip? I thought I'd catch you next fall," Malfoy snickered, earning a high five from his two goons. Hiccup glared at him, which had absolutely no impact on the pale haired boy.

"You laugh now Malfoy but I assure you, if you'd met Toothless, you wouldn't be so pleased with yourself," Hiccup said before getting the hell out of there, not waiting for him to answer. Malfoy aggravated Hiccup more than Snotlout usually did, and that was saying something.

Heading straight for the tower, Hiccup knew he still needed to go and see the dragons. He kept sighing to himself as he ascended the steps to get Toothless. On the way up, he heard the sounds of scratching against the stone walls. He wasn't very surprised to hear a whining voice, which he knew recognised as Toothless's. He rolled his eyes as he opened the door.

Toothless instantly jumped onto Hiccup, knocking them both to the floor. Hiccup laughed as the dragon presented him with a long line of saliva down his chest. He shoved Toothless off and hugged his neck, before shaking off the excess saliva. The dragon was always so excited, which wasn't a bad thing, of course, just unnecessary sometimes.

Hiccup laughed as Toothless sat up and made gurgling sounds from the back of his throat. "Yeah, I know you're all alone, bud. Did they go back to see the dragons?" he asked Toothless.

Toothless nodded his head slightly, confirming Hiccup's suspicions. The dragon didn't like to be on his own for too long, and Hiccup didn't usually like the result. He could go slightly crazy, becoming more attached to Hiccup, as he'd just shown. Hiccup didn't like to leave him on his own either, but it was more to do with the fact he was his best friend and he couldn't imagine life without Toothless.

"Well, let's go and see Razor Neck then. I'm sure this will be interesting," he finally said. Toothless grumbled lowly in the back of his throat, not wanting Hiccup to be near the dangerous dragon. Hiccup smiled and gently scratched the dragon's neck. Toothless purred and gave Hiccup the big eyes he adored.

Hiccup quickly put the dragon's saddle on and they dashed over to the balcony. They still had a few hours before dinner, but classes were over which meant it would be dangerous to fly the dragon and walk the halls with him.

Toothless waited for Hiccup to settle in the saddle before spreading his wings and taking off towards the keepers. Hiccup steered the dragon, but only lightly, knowing that Toothless was fully capable of listening to his voice instead of the steering system he'd created for the dragon. It was more for holding onto him so he didn't fall off.

They landed in the centre of the clearing, surrounded by the other Vikings and the three keepers. Hiccup laughed at the shocked faces as they stared at the Night Fury in the centre of the clearing. Toothless growled as he looked at all the caged dragons, not liking it at all. He stared at the baby dragon and hissed at the keeper next to it. Hiccup laid a gentle hand on Toothless, preventing him from doing something he'd regret later.

Astrid ran over to Hiccup and beamed, quickly followed by the blue and purple Nadder. Stormfly stood protectively behind Astrid, shielding her from the keepers view. She was pretty clever like that, just like Toothless, although he was more extreme.

"What did Harry and Hermione want?" she asked worriedly.

Hiccup shrugged. "Not much. She wanted to know more about Berk, so I told her," he explained blandly. She shot him a surprised look. He quickly added, "I didn't tell her anything about the dragons. I just said we had big lizards for pets."

She laughed and nudged his arm lightly, not wanting to do it too hard because he was sitting on Toothless, and the repercussions could be pretty disastrous for her. "Well, they sort of are," she said happily, walking back over to her chosen dragon. Hiccup rolled his eyes as he watched her leave. Her dragon was warming up to her already, she barely had anything left to do. Grass Glow was a pretty easy going creature, so Hiccup had been told.

Charlie walked over to Hiccup cautiously. The Viking hopped off the dragon and stood facing the keeper, standing in front of Toothless to prevent the dragon from attacking. Toothless bared his teeth and hissed loudly, making it clear to Charlie that he wasn't to take another step closer.

"Hiccup, I thought that you wouldn't be coming in today," Charlie said, standing as far away from Hiccup and the deadly dragon as he could.

Hiccup shrugged casually and grinned. "I wouldn't miss the chance to nearly get killed by Razor Neck," he exclaimed, making Toothless turn his attention to said dragon. Razor Neck was prowling around his large cage, hot steam breath escaping his nose every moment or two. His wings were opened and he wasn't hiding his anger at all. Toothless didn't want his Viking around this dragon. Hiccup wasn't strong enough and he knew it, but Toothless would be around to make sure the dragon behaved himself.

Charlie smiled slightly. "I'm sure you wouldn't. Who's this one, then?" he asked, gesturing to Toothless.

Hiccup patted Toothless on the head, earning a slight nudge to keep it up. He smiled and scratched behind his chin and laughed as the dangerous dragon made purring sounds, giving him a bad image. He looked anything but deadly. "This is Toothless, he's my best friend and a Night Fury," he emphasised Night Fury, because he knew Charlie wouldn't have a clue what breed this was.

Charlie swallowed slightly, looking nervous. "He won't hurt you?" he asked nervously.

Toothless gave him the 'are you insane?' look, which Hiccup chuckled at. "Everyone else but not me," he assured him.

It wasn't comforting for Charlie to hear that the dragon didn't do too well with other people. Hiccup didn't really want other people going near his dragon anyway, and he was pleased to see that Toothless didn't want anyone else near him anyway. It was pretty easy to tell who the dragon belonged to. Or which Viking belonged to Toothless, as the case may be. Toothless was pretty possessive of the scrawny, one legged Viking boy.

As if someone had shocked him, Charlie stood up straight and was back in business. "Well, Razor Neck needs some attention, you've got some work to do. We're going to be starting the real training next week which gives us two weeks before the task to get them ready," he

explained, his voice formal and stern.

Hiccup nodded and sighed. "Of course. Thanks for the heads up." He looked up at Toothless who sat on his hind legs and followed the Viking.

They walked slowly over to the angry Hungarian Horntail. Hiccup swallowed as he gathered his courage and stood in front of the dragon. Razor Neck growled loudly and faced Hiccup. Toothless snarled at him, effectively shutting the larger dragon up. Hiccup laid a gentle hand on Toothless, restraining him from doing anything that could get him hurt.

"Hey, mate. You know I won't hurt you," Hiccup said gently as he stepped closer to the cage. Razor Neck breathed a heavy bout of fire and Toothless barely covered the Viking in time. He wrapped his wings around the boy protectively and aimed his most deadly glare at the Hungarian Horntail. Hiccup knew this would take a while.

Toothless let go of Hiccup once he was sure that he wasn't hurt from the fire. Hiccup had to admit, he wasn't expecting the blast. He watched helplessly as Toothless snarled at the larger, spikier dragon in the cage. The Night Fury snarled and shot a warning plasma blast at the floor of the cage. Razor Neck instantly hung his head in apology. He didn't seem to like Night Fury's, which made Hiccup wonder.

"It's alright bud, he didn't hurt me," Hiccup gently soothed the dragon and stepped back up to the cage. Razor Neck snarled and turned on his two legs to spin around, effectively shutting Hiccup out and turning his back on him rudely.

Hiccup sighed. This was going to take a \_long \_time.

\* \* \*

><p>After the incident with Ron in the hall, Hermione had dragged Harry off to the library. She'd apparently gotten some great idea about how to find out more about the Vikings. Harry wasn't too keen, but he didn't put up a fight. He didn't need to learn anything more than what Hiccup had told him. He trusted Hiccup enough to believe that nothing bad was really happening with them and he didn't want to dig into their personal history.</p>

Hermione was looking through the history section when she let out a loud "yes!" and almost had them kicked out of the library. Harry rolled his eyes as they sat down at one of the numerous tables inside the library.

"I knew Hiccup didn't tell us everything," she muttered to herself as she read through the long and winded passages in the book.

Harry looked over her shoulder sceptically, not liking the looks of these pages. Among them he saw a bunch of runes and what looked to be a torn out page. He realised it had been pasted into the book, from another one. Hermione didn't seem to care, but Harry thought it was strange. Surely they didn't have actual evidence from another book? That would mean this was the only copy...

After a while of sitting there blankly, Harry decided to go and find

a book for himself. He looked through many on creatures until he came across one that interested him. It was written by muggles, but had somehow found its way into a magical library. Harry read the title and chuckled to himself. Of course, muggles didn't know these creatures actually existed, but that didn't mean their information was incorrect.

Sitting back next to Hermione, Harry opened A Tour of Mystical Beings and looked at the contents. There were some creatures in there that Hagrid had shown the kids in his Care of Magical Creature's classes and Harry was familiar with. One creature really got Harry's attention; dragons. He thoughtfully turned to the page, looking at the graphic images of people slaying the beasts. He had never really learnt about dragons, not really believing they existed. He knew one of Ron's brothers worked with them in Romania, though, which confirmed their existence.

Hermione looked up and over Harry's shoulder, grimacing at the gruesome images. She didn't care much for violence, especially towards creatures that weren't treated fairly to begin with.

They lapsed back into silence for a while, Hermione and Harry both humming to themselves in their heads. Thoughts swirled around Harry's head as he read about the numerous different types of dragons that resided around the world. They didn't sound believable, though, with such farfetched names. They mentioned how the different dragons spawned in different seasons, while others were born from dark magic.

Hermione gasped suddenly, shaking Harry's shoulder violently. He looked up at her, wide eyed, as she looked like she'd seen a ghost. "They kill dragons!" she exclaimed in a whisper, barely loud enough for Harry to hear her. He could tell why Hermione was so shocked since he didn't think dragons were real, let alone hunted. Shouldn't they cherish having such unique creatures in their world?

"Does it say people in Berk do?" he asked curiously. It wasn't really his business, but he would have liked to know if Hiccup was a dragon slayer. The Viking looked too weak to kill a person, let alone a dragon.

Hermione nodded slowly, her eyes still wide in shock. "Yeah, this book is all about different Viking civilisations. It mentions Berk and how many generations have grown up to kill the dragons on their island. It doesn't say why or how though," she explained.

Harry sighed slightly. He still couldn't believe what he was hearing. Hiccup was a dragon killer? How could someone as small like him kill something as big and dangerous as a dragon? Didn't he have a heart? Well, they were Vikings, known to kill anything without a second thought. But Hiccup? That didn't seem right.

Hermione nodded and sighed deeply. She closed the book and gave Harry a sorrowful look. "I don't think these Vikings are people we should be hanging out with, Harry."

For once, he agreed.

## 5. Chapter 5

The Vikings had been at Hogwarts for a week now, meaning the first task was in two. Harry wasn't happy about either. Ever since he and Hermione had discovered the Vikings were killing the dragons, they were avoiding them. Luckily, it wasn't that hard since the Vikings never seemed to be at the tables when it came to meal times. Gobber always sat at the teacher's table, but apart from him, there weren't any Vikings around.

Harry didn't know if he was sad or not about finding out the Vikings slayed dragons. He'd lost most of his respect for the one legged, scrawny Viking. The only thing that he could still say was: 'how could he have managed to kill those beasts?' Unless they were miniature, Harry knew there was no way Hiccup could have managed without help.

Hermione had been dragging Harry towards the common room for the past few moments, she didn't like how Harry and Ron were treating each other. She was torn between spending time with her smart best friend, or the one that constantly needed her help for homework.

"Come on, Hermione. This is never going to work," Harry muttered as they entered the common room. Unsurprisingly, there were a bunch of Gryffindor occupying the space. Ron happened to be sitting with his brothers at the tables to the left, snickering every so often.

Hermione dragged Harry over to the red headed boy, making the twins scatter. They gave Harry a quick glance, not understanding Ron's issue with Harry, before leaving the common room all together. Harry sensed a plan forming in their minds, but didn't say anything.

Ron looked up and sneered at Harry. "What, Hermione not good enough as a friend now, Liar?" he leered. Ron had taken the name 'Liar' for Harry and it managed to aggravate him to no extent. It was extremely annoying and Ron knew this, which was why he called him that in the first place.

Harry sighed. "Ron, you know I didn't put my name in that goblet," he said softly, his voice slightly pleading. As much as he loved Hermione as a friend, he missed being able to talk to Ron about almost anything, even late at night when they were about to go to bed.

Ron glanced up at Harry sceptically. "Really? Because it seems to me as though you're lapping all of this fame up," he spat.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Really? Ron, you know me better than anyone. Would I really want the fame?"

Ron looked up slowly. He shook his head slightly and sighed. "No, I guess not. I don't know, Harry....," he admitted.

Harry laughed slightly, despite how serious the situation was. "Of course, take your time. Just know, Ron, I'm still your friend," he turned to leave, all this sentimental crap giving him a headache, when he was stopped by a voice. It was one of the best things he'd heard in a long time.

"Leaving without your best friend?" Ron asked lightly, hopping up and standing next to Harry. Harry laughed, feeling lightheaded. Hermione's tactics had finally worn down Ron, which was really good for all three of them. Now they were the trio they should be.

Being as it was the weekend, they had no classes and they were free to do what they pleased on campus. That meant that they could stroll around and not worry about homework. Of course, Hermione being Hermione, was always stressed, but even she toned it down for the pair.

They sat down outside the school grounds on the grass, talking about random things like how they were glad to be back as a group, how boring classes were, or how annoying Malfoy was being. They avoided the impending Tournament, which Harry was completely fine with since he did not want to think about his inevitable doom.

After a while, they lapsed into a comfortable silence and Harry felt himself smile. He had his best friend back and he couldn't have been happier. It had been pretty uncomfortable for them all when they had been separated. But as much as he tried, he couldn't completely take his mind off Hiccup.

The one legged Viking didn't seem like the type to kill anything, let alone a dragon. Harry couldn't put his finger on why, but he knew there was no way such a small boy could ever kill one. He just didn't think it was possible, but he kept his thoughts to himself, unwilling to ruin the happy moment they were having.

Harry wondered for a moment; Ron and Harry were best friends, and it had been a nightmare while they were fighting. What if Hiccup had a best friend that he couldn't bring to Hogwarts with him? Was he missing his best friend? Harry felt his heart ache for the small boy at the thought of him being sad. It just wasn't right, nothing about the Viking made sense.

Hermione looked over to Harry and laughed. "What are you thinking about, Harry?" she asked lightly.

Harry shrugged and looked away, feeling his cheeks flush slightly. "Not much, Hermione," he replied.

Ron sat up straight and looked at him, smirking slightly. "Oh, there is definitely something that I missed, isn't there, Harry?" he teased.

Harry put his head in his hands and shook his head. He started to laugh and his body shook from the force of it. "Guys, lay off it. It's none of your business....," he said, but there was no force behind it that told them to back off. Instead, they pressed further.

Hermione chuckled and looked away. "Come on, Harry. We all know that look."

"What look?" Harry's head shot up, giving her a questioning glance.

Ron laughed as he caught on to what Hermione was implying. "The look, Harry. You're thinking about someone."

Harry sighed and shook his head slowly, smiling slightly. "Guys, if I liked someone in \_that way\_, I would have told you by now. So you know as well as I do that I \_don't\_," he said.

They laughed and shook him off, falling back into the grass. Harry found himself blushing further, not knowing how exactly to hide it. They couldn't have thought that he actually liked someone, though, right? Sure, he liked plenty of girls, but not in \_that way\_. Then there was Hiccup...but there weren't words for the way Harry felt about \_him\_.

Harry watched the Forbidden Forest for a moment, staring at it but thinking of Hiccup. Now that he'd thought of it, he couldn't help but wonder if Hiccup had friends back on Berk. Were they killing dragons and beating the high scores? Harry had so many questions, but he couldn't bring himself to actually \_talk\_ to Hiccup; it would be far too awkward for his liking.

A movement caught Harry's eye and he looked up at it. His eyes fell on a person walking out of the forest slowly, a limp evident even from this distance. Harry looked closer as the figure emerged and saw that it was Hiccup.

Harry watched as the scrawny boy limped across the lawn and towards the castle. Harry couldn't stand it anymore and stood up, earning him a strange look from both his friends. They followed his eyes and saw Hiccup. While Hermione glared at him, Ron grinned and hopped up. Harry jogged over to Hiccup, startling him out of whatever thoughts he'd been in.

"Oh, Harry, I didn't see you there," Hiccup said, though his normally happy voice was strained. Harry noticed his harsh limp, on his one good leg. His face was covered in dirt, and what seemed to be burn marks. His arms had scrapes and cuts along them, some older than others. Harry felt a pang of sorrow for the Viking, knowing there was little he could do for him.

"Are you alright, Hiccup?" Harry asked worriedly.

Hiccup shrugged and continued to take weak steps. His prosthetic leg didn't provide much balance, but his wounded leg seemed worse off than his metal one. Harry felt incredibly bad for him, despite the dragons that he could have killed.

"I'm alright, it's nothing I haven't dealt with before," Hiccup said.

Harry knew what that meant: the Viking had been injured in battle and he was used to the pain. Somehow, Harry felt guilty...he knew it wasn't a good thing. Hermione would have his head for saying that about the killer of dragons. "Do you need any help?" he asked worriedly.

Hiccup shook his head and determinedly took another step. Unfortunately for him, his metal leg buckled and he almost fell to the ground, had Harry not seen it happening and caught him just before he hit the ground. Hiccup fell straight into Harry's arms and Harry almost grinned, but decided against it.

"Oh. Maybe help would be nice," Hiccup muttered, more to himself than to Harry.

Harry grinned and helped Hiccup back to his feet. "Where are we headed?" he asked happily. He was enjoying this far too much, but he couldn't help himself. Ron gave him a funny look, then looked back at Hiccup.

Hiccup shrugged. "I was going to go back to the tower, see my friends and all, but I don't know if I'm going to be able to climb all the steps," he muttered.

Harry looked over at Ron, giving him a nod. Ron returned it and stepped closer to Hiccup. "We can help you," Harry said, lifting his arm around the Vikings shoulder and helping to take the weight off his leg. Ron did the same with the other side and Hiccup was effortlessly picked up off the ground. Harry was surprised by how light the Viking was, despite everything.

Ron looked as though he was itching to ask Hiccup something. Hiccup sighed and gave Ron the 'go ahead' look. Ron grinned. "How's everything going?" he implied something, but Harry couldn't tell what it was.

"Horrible," Hiccup stated sadly.

Ron looked to Harry with a sad smile. Harry knew that whatever it was that they were talking about, it wasn't something that Harry was allowed to know. "What happened this time?"

Hiccup sighed angrily. "Well, I'd love to say that my idiot friend was there, but he wasn't fast enough. Actually, he was paying more attention to the keepers for once...so yeah. He got me a good one," he gestured down to his good leg with a pained expression.

Harry felt another throb at the thought that the young Viking was in pain. He didn't know what he could do and he just seemed so young, so innocent. Harry thought over Hiccup's words after a moment. He had been doing something dangerous, something his friends couldn't stop. This was something Hermione would be able to help with, it wasn't Harry's cup of tea.

Ron rolled his eyes. "I'm sure you'll be fine. Besides, I doubt he'll be letting you out of your sight now," he smirked knowingly.

Hiccup grimaced. "Yeah, that's what I'm afraid of," he muttered. He looked up at the tower for a moment before looking back at Ron. They seemed to share a knowing look and Harry felt himself get angry. He wanted to know what it was that they were talking about. He didn't like being left in the dark.

They entered the building and Harry sighed to himself. He didn't listen to Hiccup and Ron's conversation, since he wasn't going to understand a word of it. Instead he let his mind wander. He didn't think of how Hiccup killed dragons, instead he imagined Hiccup being a wizard, being one of Harry's own friends. He imagined being able to just talk to Hiccup freely without worrying of saying the wrong thing. Just talking, as he did with Ron and Hermione. It would have been nice to be friends with Hiccup, Harry thought, or even more. But he doubted Hiccup felt the same way.

Once they reached the top of the stairs, Hiccup gave the two wizards a farewell smile before darting inside. Harry sighed to himself as they headed down the stairs to their own common room. They heard thumping upstairs but didn't think anything of it. It was completely normal: they'd heard it for the past few weeks.

Hermione was sitting by the fire in the common room, her eyes focused on the fire, but her thoughts clearly elsewhere. Harry jumped onto the couch next to her and beamed at her. She startled and hit Harry lightly for scaring her. He chuckled to himself as she recovered and gave him a weak smile.

"Where did you guys go?" she asked, but she knew exactly where they had gone. She still didn't like Hiccup, or any of his group, and Harry knew that she had good reason. He still didn't trust Hiccup completely, or like that he killed dragons, but he couldn't help the way he felt.

Ron sat on the other side of Hermione and beamed. "We were talking to Hiccup. You won't believe what he's going through at the moment," he snickered, obviously pleased with Hiccup's current weak state.

Hermione glared at Ron. She still hadn't told him what they'd found out, of course, being that she hadn't talked to him in the whole week. "Ron, you know they kill dragons?" she asked softly, but her voice still the same confident one they'd come to know.

Ron paused for a moment, blinking slowly, before laughing slightly. "Well, yeah, I do. But, they don't any\_more," he informed the pair.

Harry looked at Hermione sceptically. Had they heard right? And how did Ron know? He seemed like the least likely of people to know such facts ahead of time. He must have found out before Hermione - which would make her angry - and then asked Hiccup himself. That seemed like the only logical explanation for such statements.

"Really? How do you know, Ron?" Hermione asked. Harry could already feel his heart lifting before reminding himself not to get too optimistic.

Ron rolled his eyes. "I can't tell you that, what with Harry here and everything, but trust me, he doesn't kill them," he joked.

Hermione nodded, giving Harry a look. Harry held up his hands and laughed, hopping up off the couch. She rolled her eyes and watched as he darted out of the room. Much as he wanted to hear about how Ron knew that Hiccup didn't kill the dragons, he was too happy to learn that they didn't. He didn't have to worry about him being a killer anymore. His heart felt strangely light, as though nothing bad could happen for a while. But he knew, what with everything going on, something bad was bound to go wrong. He still needed to talk to that new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, he'd asked to see Harry earlier, but he was too busy with his friends.

Harry shook his head and sat on his bead lazily, closing his eyes as

positive thoughts swirled around his head. He felt like he was up in the clouds, but he couldn't explain why. He imagined it had something to do with the cute little Viking upstairs somewhere, the one that didn't kill dragons.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup leaned against Toothless painfully. His leg was throbbing mercilessly, with no way to ease it. Gobber had suggested they chop it off, but Toothless and Hiccup had been quick to object. Upon closer inspection, it was just a deep cut, nothing too deadly. Toothless was feeling incredibly bad; his Viking was injured because of him. But Hiccup had been quick to point out that there wasn't anything that he could have done, and he was glad that Toothless had been watching the keepers as well. They were starting to get on his nerves. Nobody dared get close to Razor Neck - nobody except Hiccup - so when the keepers were on his case, saying that he wasn't doing a good enough job with the dragon, well, he got pretty mad. He'd like to see <em>them</em> go near him when he's angry.

Toothless looked over Hiccup's shoulder sadly. Hiccup looked up into his emerald eyes and smiled, glad to just have Toothless around. If Astrid was here, he would never hear the end of it. She would complain that he was a weakling, which might have been true, but Hiccup wasn't about to admit that to anyone else. Toothless didn't need Hiccup to say anything which was one of the many reasons they were so good together.

Hiccup sighed deeply as he relaxed into Toothless's side. The dragon curved his body to make it easier for him to do so, but also so it was comfortable for him. Hiccup looked up at the roof of their room sadly. The rest of the dragons were all doing so well, it was just Razor Neck that posed a problem. Hiccup had to go out at night to see them, simply because Razor Neck was just too dangerous during the day. He'd made the mistake of going earlier when he thought it would be fine, and came back with the injuries. Not that he wouldn't receive them anyway, but they were worse during the day.

"We're never going to be able to train him, Toothless," Hiccup said sadly.

Toothless gave Hiccup his cute eye. Hiccup smiled and scratched his chin weakly. The dragon purred happily as he put his head on the floor and let Hiccup stop scratching him. Hiccup rolled his eyes at the dragon. So much for comfort, he thought.

Hiccup's thoughts went over the past week. While the Vikings had had more work down with the keepers and their dragons, Hiccup helped with the others as well. He didn't go near Razor Neck until after sun down. As for the leash, well, they hadn't gotten around to building it. The keepers had suggested a material they could use which would be strong enough but the only downside was that they had to ask Dumbledore for it. So that wasn't happening any time soon.

The Vikings had been so busy that they had to be given their meals in their rooms, or sometimes at Hagrid's. Hagrid loved Toothless the most out of the Vikings dragons, but that wasn't a surprise. Toothless was pretty deadly and an extremely cool dragon. Hiccup was biased too, but most of the other villagers thought so too, and they were envious of the Night Fury.

With so many things going on, Hiccup hadn't been able to talk to his new friends. Well, he thought they were. About a week ago, there was a day it seemed like they were avoiding him. Of course, Ron still spoke to him, but Ron wasn't talking to Harry, and they were the main issue. Hiccup figured it had to do with something he'd said—but then Harry came to help when his leg had been at its worst.

Hiccup's thoughts went over to Ron. As the brother of one of the keepers, Ron spent a heap of time with him. Despite the Forbidden Forest being...well, forbidden, he still managed to spend time there. He'd met Toothless on numerous occasions and thought he was pretty neat. Toothless, however, wasn't fond of the red head and Hiccup understood it, however strange it was.

The day was nearing its end, which sadly meant that Hiccup would have to work with Razor Neck. He would eat in the hall before going down since his friends had all agreed that they would try to eat with everyone else. They knew that it would be strange if they never ate with the rest of the school so they would be eating with the others today, Hiccup still had time before they would be back, though.

Hiccup closed his eyes as he allowed himself to shut himself off for a while. He felt Toothless shift beneath him, getting himself into a comfortable position to sleep in. Hiccup smiled as he let his mind wander aimlessly, nothing really sticking into one thought. He was so tired, everything was just jumbled.

The dragons were too much work for Hiccup to handle, Razor Neck especially, and none of his friends were willing to go near him. It was just Hiccup, and it wasn't working very well. Though Razor Neck didn't want to attack Toothless, he was still bold enough to attack Hiccup. That made Toothless even angrier and Razor Neck knew to never do it when Toothless was paying attention. There were the few occasions where he was too stupid to remember the Night Fury, and things were sorted out quickly.

Hiccup had received several injuries on numerous accounts but the leg hurt more than anything he'd received before. The others were scratches, nothing he wouldn't get when flying on Toothless, and nothing he wasn't used to.

Hearing a knock, Hiccup sat up instantly. He watched as the door opened slowly, leading two figures inside. Hiccup scowled as he noticed Dumbledore and the new teacher, Professor Alastor Moody. He was the defence against the dark arts and many students had called him Mad Eye. Hiccup didn't like him any more than he liked the keepers, or any of the wizards, but he kept his thoughts to himself. He had to admit, he was slightly frightened by the man.

Toothless leapt to his feet and stood wearily behind Hiccup. The one legged boy slowly rose to his feet, losing his balance slightly and being caught by Toothless. He thanked the dragon and earned a low grumble in return.

Dumbledore stood looking at Hiccup expectantly. Hiccup sighed and stood straight, addressing both the teachers with a nod. They returned it, slightly stiffly. Hiccup almost rolled his eyes, but resisted. These people wouldn't have come here if they hadn't meant

business.

"Hiccup, I'm sure you've met Professor Moody?" Dumbledore asked, his eyes shining happily. Apparently having the other Professor here gave the headmaster a sense of happiness. Hiccup wondered who this teacher really was. He'd heard rumours that he was an auror, but he hadn't a clue what that meant.

The Viking nodded slowly. "On an occasion," he replied.

Professor Moody grinned, his glass eye watching the dragon wearily. Hiccup found the eye gross, it was like one of the Viking's on Berk, but instead it moved to where the teacher wanted to look. It was creepy beyond belief yet Hiccup thought it would be pretty handy. If he had to lose an eye, he'd want a replacement like this one.

Dumbledore nodded and stepped forward, crossing his pale arms across his robes to meet in the middle. "Right. Well, as you're aware, young Harry is entering the Triwizard Tournament," Dumbledore started. Hiccup nodded, despite everything. He did understand this but he also knew where it was going. Dumbledore would want something from the Viking like he always did. They never had a conversation that didn't involve their deal, or something along those lines.

Professor Moody stepped forward, leaning heavily on his wooden stick. For such a short man, he did a good job of intimidating Hiccup. Not that that was a hard thing to do, of course, just that he did a good job. "We can't risk anything happening to the young lad," he spoke harshly and in a tongue that made little sense to Hiccup, yet he understood what he was saying.

"You want me to make the dragons too easy for Harry so that he doesn't have any drama?" Hiccup asked, rolling his eyes. He hoped they didn't mean that, because, let's face it, there was no way Hiccup could get Razor Neck to do anything he wanted. There was just no way...

Dumbledore nodded. "Yes, that would be preferable but, as I am to understand, you have had some difficulties with one of the dragons?" he asked sceptically.

Hiccup sighed and nodded. "Yeah, he doesn't let anyone near him," he admitted. As much as he hated to admit it, he couldn't train this dragon. It was like the Whispering Death that wanted so badly to kill Toothless. He couldn't train that one. Now he seemed to be having the same troubles, but on a different scale. At least the Whispering Death hadn't hurt him, just scared him a bit.

Professor Moody looked thoughtful as he leant on the cane. "There are several things we could do to help you, if you so desire," he started.

Hiccup hurried to shake his head. "That won't be necessary; I just need time. Toothless and I can do this as long as no one does anything stupid around him, I know that we can do it," he said determinedly.

Dumbledore smiled. "That's good to hear, Hiccup. As I'm sure you're aware, if this doesn't work out, the dragons won't live for very

long." Without waiting for Hiccup to say anything, he turned to leave. Professor Moody hung back for a moment, giving Toothless the once over. He shook his head angrily as he, too, left the tower.

Hiccup turned to Toothless angrily. Toothless looked pretty unhappy too, with the lives of the dragons being threatened and all that. It was pretty bad for a dragon to have to hear that sort of thing. Hiccup understood it too because when they'd first met, Toothless wasn't exactly Hiccup's favourite dragon.

Looking around, Hiccup sighed. "We have to make sure that this works, bud," Hiccup said sadly.

Toothless purred and pushed against Hiccup lightly. He grinned and hugged his neck happily. Even when the dragon was sad, he always found a way to cheer up his Viking. He sat back on his hind legs as Hiccup stood back and looked around the room.

"Well, I'm starving," he stated, his mood lifting completely. Toothless grumbled in agreement. Hiccup knew that Toothless would be getting food eventually, but from some unknown source. As for Hiccup, the dinner was almost ready. He would have to head down soon so that he would be there on time and wouldn't have to limp in with everyone watching him.

Toothless ran over to the fire happily. Hiccup rolled his eyes and called out a farewell, before heading out the stairs. The dragon watched Hiccup limp out the door, slightly ashamed, yet he knew there wasn't anything he could do. Toothless breathed heavily and closed his eyes, moving closer to the fire.

Hiccup chuckled to himself as he left the tower and headed down the numerous stairs. He wasn't in his right mind as he landed on the last step, almost toppling over. He grabbed hold of the rail for support and sighed angry to himself. It was just his luck that he had a bung leg and a metal one. Some would even say it was quite the predicament.

As he walked down the corridor, Hiccup met the stares of plenty of wizards. He knew what they were thinking, he didn't need to be a wizard to know that. They were all wondering why he was injured again and why they hadn't shown up for many meals over the past week.

Hiccup smirked inwardly as he thought of how Toothless would handle this situation. He would have scared all the silly wizards out of their wits, which would have been hilarious to watch. Maybe Hiccup should do that...bring Toothless into the Great Hall and have him pretend to attack Hiccup. The young boy laughed at himself at the thought. Of course, Dumbledore wouldn't be too happy to see such a thing, but it would be priceless. It would have to wait until after the First Task though.

The other Vikings were already seated in the hall, talking amongst themselves. They looked up as Hiccup sat next to Hiccup, already aware of his limp. Snotlout had laughed at him and the twins thought it incredibly cool and wanted their dragon to blow them up. Yeah, they were strange. Astrid had offered small amounts of sympathy, but Hiccup could tell that she didn't really care. Then there was

Fishlegs, who really didn't seem to bother. He was thinking, off in Valhalla, probably about the dragons.

"Are you going to be going down to the dragons tonight?" Astrid asked Hiccup. It was quiet, yet there weren't very many people in listening distance from them. No one they were concerned with, anyway.

Hiccup sighed resentfully and nodded. "Yeah, I have to," he replied.

She nodded and leaned in closer to Hiccup. "We were told to show up too. Something about our leader being there....," she explained.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Gobber didn't show?" he asked lightly.

She hit him lightly on the shoulder. "Of course. They meant you, Hiccup," she teased.

He laughed to himself. "Sure, well, I'll be there. I have to work with Razor Neck."

Astrid nodded sadly. "Yeah, I know. I really want to help you but....," she trailed off unhappily.

"Yeah, I know. It's too dangerous," Hiccup finished. He knew it was dangerous, even for him, so he wasn't going to allow any of his friends near the dragon. None of them had dragons which had an influence over the Hungarian Horntail, Hiccup didn't think it would be wise to involve them. At least with Toothless the whole situation was much safer, if you could go that far.

More students started to enter the hall and their conversation steered away from the dragons. They started to talk in their natural tongue, about the things that could be happening on Berk and such. Hiccup talked to both Astrid and Fishlegs, mainly about the upcoming dragon race. It was something new to the island, but extremely fun. With the teens away, the festivities would be passed to the older generations and their dragons, which would have been funny to watch. None of the older Vikings really had fast dragons and they generally stuck with the sturdy Gronkles or the Nadders. Neither were particular fast, maybe the Nadder.

Dumbledore stood at the front pedestal once everyone was in the room. He announced that the meal had begun, making plates appear on the tables. Hiccup watched as the wizards dug into their food as though there was no tomorrow.

After a short while, the Vikings were all eating too busily to talk much. Ruff and Tuff were being stupid however, throwing food at each other. Hiccup laughed as Tuffnut's blond hair caught a piece of beef. Ruffnut snickered as she watched her brother struggle to get it out.

Hiccup turned around in his chair, looking at the rest of the hall. There wasn't really that much happening, but it was loud. Like, really loud. Almost to the point where Hiccup wondered what was going on. It seemed that all the wizards were talking about the same thing. Hiccup exchanged glances with Astrid and Fishlegs, but they seemed just as clueless as he was.

For the first time that meal, Hiccup turned to his left and saw Harry and his gang sitting next to him. He felt ashamed that he hadn't noticed them, but recovered quickly. He greeted them quickly, which they all repeated themselves. Hiccup could tell they were all happy, Hermione especially, but Harry not as much. What \_was\_ going on?

"You feeling better, Hiccup?" Ron asked from across the table, his mouth full of food. Hiccup rolled his eyes, it wasn't anything that he wasn't used to. Berk was notorious for bad food eating habits.

Hiccup shrugged. "Eventually. I still have to go back out there tonight though," he shivered at his impending doom. So long as Toothless was there, he knew it couldn't end \_too\_ badly.

Harry looked at Ron, then back at Hiccup. "Where do you have to go?" he asked curiously, yet slightly confused. Hiccup instantly felt bad for leaving him in the dark. It wasn't his fault that he was part of the Tournament, now, was it?

Hiccup looked around for a moment. "Nowhere too important. But I promiseâ€|you'll know soon," he explained. He didn't want Harry going into the Tournament completely blind, he had to give him \_some\_ idea of what he was going up against. He just couldn't do it with Dumbledore breathing down his neck...or any of the \_other\_ wizards, for that matter. It was a lot of pressure for one little Viking to handle.

Ron looked at Hiccup, his expression surprised. "How? You're not meant to tell the champions anything," he exclaimed.

Hiccup shrugged. "With the way they're treating us, I think we deserve to do what we like," he said hotly.

Ron nodded slowly, his eyes calculating. "Well, as long as he doesn't tell anyone \_else\_."

"Guys, right here?" Harry interjected suddenly.

Hiccup laughed and leant back in the chair. "Of course, Harry, my bad...how could I have forgotten?" he asked himself lightly. Harry rolled his eyes at the Viking, which didn't go unnoticed.

The meal progressed slowly and Hiccup felt himself growing weary, the training session ahead of him making him feel slightly sick. He didn't want to be anywhere \_near\_ Razor Neck. He didn't feel like dying so soon.

Hiccup looked around as he lapsed into his own thoughts. No one talked to him, the Vikings having their own conversations and the wizards turning back to their own. His mind wandered to the dragon upstairs, the one which he liked and he knew liked him back. He knew Toothless wouldn't intentionally hurt him, not anymore. Their days of hating each other were over, and Hiccup couldn't have been more pleased.

Dumbledore and the rest of the teachers left the hall, dismissing the wizards leave as well. Hiccup stood up and dragged his legs towards

the exit. He could sense the other Vikings behind him, laughing, but he paid them no mind. He was starting to feel slightly better and his limp wasn't as pronounced as before, but it was still there.

Hiccup went straight up to his dragon before anyone could stop him. Toothless jumped onto him and started to check for more injuries. Hiccup rolled his eyes and grabbed the dragon's saddle. Toothless jumped around excitedly, barely holding still long enough for the Viking to clip the gear up properly. Hiccup rolled his eyes as he ran over to the balcony. The rest of the Vikings were getting their dragons ready, but they gave Hiccup the go ahead look. He grinned and hopped into the saddle, clicking his metal foot into place.

Toothless shot into the air, his wings making a whistling sound. He shot towards the Forest at a speed that unmatched by any other dragon. Hiccup leaned forward and grinned as the dragon picked up speed before dropping to the ground in front of the keepers. He'd been coming up with creative new ways to startle the keepers, and this one seemed to be a keeper in itself.

Charlie Weasley scowled slightly as he approached Hiccup, but only when Hiccup was off the dragon. Hiccup stood up straight and let the keeper approach him. The other two keepers followed quietly behind, their expressions grim. "Are your friends coming?" he asked.

Hiccup nodded, giving a pointed look to the sky. At that moment, the group of dragons were spotted in the sky, trying to find a nice place to land. They hadn't been that far behind Hiccup and Toothless, it seemed. Once they had landed, Charlie nodded to all of them, which they returned.

"We're here to talk about the Tournament, yes?" Hiccup asked.

Charlie nodded. "Yes. Come with me," he said, gesturing to walk with him. Where he wanted them to go, Hiccup didn't have a clue.

The Vikings followed behind the three keepers silently. Hiccup's limp was getting progressively better, which was good, because the keepers didn't seem to notice it. Toothless followed silently behind Hiccup, constantly watching him to make sure he wasn't in danger.

They arrived at what seemed to be an arena, after ten minutes into the walk. The arena wasn't in the forest any more, instead it was filled with chairs and rocks inside. The walls were high and filled with flags. Hiccup felt that this would make a good training arena for the dragons of Berk, but he wasn't going to say anything.

"This is the arena in which the first task will be held," Charlie explained. The Vikings waited for the rest of the explanation patiently. "Your task will be to get the dragons used to being inside it, and to make sure that they protect the egg, but do not attack without reason." He gave Hiccup a pointed look at this.

Hiccup frowned. "You want us to make sure that the dragons are able to protect an egg, but only attack when the champion is going towards it?" he repeated, not quite understanding.

Kingsley nodded. "Yeah, that would be exactly what we're asking you

to do," he replied.

Astrid looked around the arena for a moment, scanning the sky and what could go wrong in a setting like this. "How are the dragons going to know that they are to stay in the arena, and not just fly out the top?" she asked.

Jeremy stepped forwards and pointed to a bolt in the ground. "Each dragon will be attached to the ground with a ten metre long metal chain. There is no way they will be able to break it."

Hiccup scowled to himself, not liking the idea. However, he felt slightly comforted that Razor Neck wouldn't be able to run straight at Hiccup when they were training. That brought them to their next problem, though, didn't it? How was Hiccup going to be able to make sure that Razor Neck simply guarded the egg, and not attack the first person who got close to him? It wasn't going to be easy, that was for sure.

They headed back to the dragons slowly. Astrid talked to Fishlegs about tactics, working together and such. Hiccup thought it would be a good idea, if he wasn't so protective over his friends. Toothless stayed back with Hiccup and watched him. He was paying attention to his Viking, but also to the keepers, who kept sending glances towards Hiccup while talking amongst themselves.

Once they were back at the camp site, the Vikings split up. They went to their respective dragons and gave them some food. Hiccup slowly walked over to Razor Neck, dreading the confrontation already. Toothless bared his teeth in warning as they approached the crazed dragon, warning him not to harm Hiccup again.

Razor Neck leapt forward in the cage, pushing it over and almost moving it from its place on the ground. Hiccup stood his ground and looked directly into the eyes of the dragon, something you should never do with a dragon unless you're trying to intimidate them. Razor Neck held firm and refused to look away, forcing Hiccup to step closer and raise his head.

Toothless watched the stare off angrily, growling lowly at Razor Neck to look away, to submit. Razor Neck made no such move and Hiccup took another step forward. The dragon backed away slowly, knowing full well he couldn't win this. He lowered his head slightly and clicked his tongue, submitting to Hiccup's stare. Hiccup nodded harshly, not wanting to show that he was thankful the dragon hadn't hurt him.

Hiccup walked to the cage and grabbed the fish which had been placed near it. Razor Neck stepped forwards and croaked happily, wanting the food. He lowered his head to Hiccup's level and tried to press closer for the food. Hiccup took it away from him and scowled at him. Razor Neck roared at Hiccup, wanting the food.

"No," Hiccup said sternly.

Razor Neck stood up straight and prepared the fire in the back of his throat. Toothless instantly hissed and jumped over Hiccup, covering him with his large near black but blue wings. Hiccup frowned as he bent closer to the ground, knowing that Toothless would be trying to get the fish himself. He rolled his eyes as he felt the familiar tug

at the one in his hand.

Once Razor Neck had calmed down, Toothless unwrapped himself from around the Viking. He looked at him with big eyes, expecting some form of reward. Hiccup rolled his eyes and held the fish up above his head, teasing the dragon. Toothless, being a Night Fury, was quick enough to catch the fish before Hiccup could move it.

Hiccup laughed and scratched the dragons head as he ate. Toothless mumbled appreciatively with the food in his mouth. He looked back up to Razor Neck, expecting to see a furious dragon but was met with what looked like a jealous one. Hiccup furrowed his brows as he thought as to why the dragon would feel this way.

Toothless sat back lazily as he watched the dragon. Razor Neck regarded Toothless briefly before looking at Hiccup. His face dissolved slightly into one of liking, before his hard glance returned. Hiccup sighed, this dragon just going to give in.

Taking a step closer, Hiccup held out the fish tenderly to the dragon. Razor Neck cautiously stepped closer to him and stuck out a hard red tongue through the cage bars. Hiccup rolled his eyes and stepped right up to the cage. He held the fish out and into the bars, allowing the dragon to take it whole.

Razor Neck quickly threw the fish into the air with his teeth and swallowed the thing whole. He looked at Hiccup with a different expression to those he'd given him before. It was one of trust, something he never thought to see in such a dragon. Hiccup smiled kindly at him, handing him another piece of fish.

Again, Razor Neck swallowed the fish whole. He clicked his tongue happily as he waited patiently for Hiccup to move. His entire hostile demeanour disappeared, and he seemed like a different dragon. Hiccup had to admit, he liked this side to the dragon. It was the first time that he'd seen it, and he hoped it wasn't the last.

Eventually, the fish was finished and the dragon sat down happily, closing its wings over its legs. Hiccup watched it with a smile on his face. Razor Neck seemed to have a cold exterior, but he could sense that something had happened in his life to make him this way, a sincere lack of distrust like this could only be the result of some sort of previous incident. He needed to talk to the keepers.

## 6. Chapter 6

They still had a week before the first task, but that still meant that it was getting closer. While Hiccup had some major breakthroughs Razor Neck, the dragon was still edgy and refused to trust Hiccup. It was becoming progressively worse during the day, when he would light the whole forest alight and thump around, but during night he would be perfectly comfortable around the Viking boy.

Hiccup couldn't help but feel bad for Razor Neck: he had plenty of reasons to be angry and weary towards the keepers, yet it made Hiccup feel bad too. He was the one allowing the keepers to keep the dragon in such small confines.

The other Vikings were doing well. So well, in fact, that they were

able to take breaks for days at a time. This was one of those days. Hiccup and Toothless were the only ones down at the arena with the dragon and the other Vikings were having a lazy day inside, or possibly flying around the Forbidden Forest. The keepers were sitting in the stands, watching carefully as Hiccup advanced the Horntail.

Razor Neck eyed the boy suspiciously. Hiccup stepped forward cautiously, making sure to watch the wings of the dragon. Although he was strapped tightly to the ground, Hiccup had seen him nearly break the iron chain before. He wasn't going to let that happen again, it had scared the life out of him.

Toothless stood back and kept his eyes trained on his Viking. He didn't like that his Viking was risking his life constantly for these stupid wizards. He admired him too, because Hiccup's only reason for doing such things was to protect the lives of the dragons. Toothless was proud to have such a selfless Viking as his own.

Hiccup approached the dragon carefully, or rather approached the place the egg was hidden. He ducked behind a rock as Razor Neck shot a blast of fire at him. Hiccup sighed to himself as he regained his balance and headed back to the dragon. Razor Neck was slightly getting the hang of things now, knowing to only attack when Hiccup was moving for the egg, and not randomly.

Toothless rocked back warily, keeping his green eyes trained on Hiccup. He didn't like the training method at all. His Viking needed to be shot at in order to train the dragon. It just wasn't fair for Hiccup, and Toothless was forced to sit on the side and watch.

Razor Neck growled loudly and shot another fire blast towards Hiccup. The Viking groaned inwardly and lowered himself to the ground. He stood up quickly, losing his balance slightly. He righted himself and stepped closer to the dragon.

Surprisingly, Razor Neck did nothing. Hiccup stood up straight and took another step. The dragon didn't move. Hiccup cautiously took another step. Razor Neck clicked and stood up onto his legs, folding his wings and turning his head to the side.

Hiccup swallowed and took another step. The dragon stood up even straighter and watched Hiccup closely, following his every movement. Hiccup knew that this wouldn't end well for him; Razor Neck had done this sort of thing before, but not nearly to this extent.

He briefly tore his eyes away from Razor Neck to look back at Toothless. The Night Fury gave him a curious yet reassuring glance. Hiccup nodded as he turned back to Razor Neck. The Hungarian Horntail turned his head and eyed Hiccup knowingly. Hiccup took another step forward and watched as Razor Neck swung his tail around impatiently. He could tell that the dragon was just waiting for the right time to strike.

Hiccup gained his courage and stood up straight, reaching forwards with his hands. Instantly, Razor Neck reacted. Hiccup had been expecting it and leapt out of the way of his furious claws. The dragon lashed out and roared loudly. The wizards in the stands stood up as Hiccup leapt to the side and hid behind a rock. He was thankful that Toothless hadn't intervened yet, otherwise things would have

gotten out of hand very quickly.

Razor Neck sprayed fire all over the stadium and Hiccup rolled his eyes. So much for his aim. He hopped out from behind the rock and dashed forward, knowing that Razor Neck was still out of control and wouldn't be focussing on him. He reached beneath the dragons large legs and grabbed the egg, clutching it close to him.

The moment that Razor Neck noticed Hiccup beneath his legs, he stopped and stood still, giving Hiccup a glare. Hiccup took several steps back, still holding the egg. He'd never actually gotten to touch the egg until now; the dragon had always gotten the better of him. This meant that things were improving, slightly.

Razor Neck lowered his head to Hiccup's level and bared his razor sharp teeth. Hiccup stepped back and put the egg on the ground. It wasn't his prize to get and he'd already proven to the dragon that nothing would happen if he did get the egg. That was his main goal for the moment.

Hiccup reached his hand out slightly towards the dragon. He hissed and Hiccup retracted quickly, trying not to threaten the dragon. He was beginning to get a strong sense of dÃ©jÃ vu, from when he first met Toothless and he allowed the Viking to touch him.

Razor Neck watched Hiccup closely as he turned around and reached his arm out again, opening his fingers and not looking at the dragon. It was a strong exercise of trust, but Hiccup didn't believe that the dragon would hurt him. He sought the best from the creature, not the worst.

After a moment, Razor Neck breathed his hot breath on Hiccup, before slowly pressing his nose into Hiccup's hand. Hiccup flinched at the contact, before turning up to look at Razor Neck. The dragon snorted again and opened his glowing eyes, blinking rapidly and turning away from Hiccup. He grinned and hopped out of the stadium. He would leave Razor Neck to himself for a while, just to think over what had happened.

It gave Hiccup hope for Razor Neck when he'd pressed his head against his hand, giving him the trust that Toothless had. Hiccup's relationship with Toothless had started much the same, but without the constant attempts to kill each other, of course.

Toothless met Hiccup just as he was exiting the arena. Hiccup grinned and tackled the dragon to the ground, rolling them onto the grass just outside the arena. Toothless grumbled happily and put his front legs either side of Hiccup's face, leaning down and giving him a long, slobbery lick along his face. Hiccup laughed and opened his eyes, bringing his arms up to Toothless front legs and batting them away.

The Night Fury growled playfully and batted Hiccup's hands away, standing up and getting into a defensive stance. Hiccup stood up too, and faced the dragon. Toothless took a step closer and Hiccup feigned a step back. Hiccup moved to the left, Toothless watching his movements closely.

Hiccup leaned forward and ran the short distance between them, wrapping his arms around Toothless's neck, using most of his weight

to drag him to the ground. Toothless playfully followed him, allowing Hiccup to push him to the ground. He opened his mouth, showing his teeth, and snapped them at Hiccup.

Toothless didn't need to use much force to stand back up and knock Hiccup beneath him. Hiccup grumbled as he landed on his back and pushed the dragon away, rolling away just as Toothless fell to the ground, exactly where Hiccup had been.

Hiccup laughed and jumped onto his back, wrapping his thin arms around his neck. Toothless stood up vertically onto his hind legs and turned his head to Hiccup. The boy struggled to keep his grip on the dragon, slipping down the shiny scales. Toothless gave him a smug look, which Hiccup responded with a scowl. He slid down the dragon's body and onto the ground, just near his tail.

Toothless growled and flipped over, his teeth just above Hiccup. He collapsed his head onto Hiccup's chest, the winner of the fray. Hiccup laughed and scratched Toothless's chin, a sure fire way to get him off. Toothless grumbled happily and stood up straight, watching his Viking as he stood up and dusted himself off. Toothless himself shook his scales, and watched as tiny flecks of dirt came off his blue scales.

Hiccup laughed and scratched the dragon behind his ears. Toothless purred happily as he turned his head to the side for Hiccup to have more access. The two stood still as they heard the sounds of approaching people. Hiccup turned around on the spot as Charlie Weasley approached, followed by Ron. Toothless curled himself around Hiccup protectively, his tail waving around Hiccup's legs with his head just in front.

Charlie stopped a couple of metres away from Hiccup, not wanting to aggravate the dragon anymore. Ron stood beside his brother and watched with interest. He seemed to like Toothless, and Hiccup thought it a wonder that he hadn't shared the news with Harry yet.

"Congratulations on your progress with the Hungarian Horntail. We have decided to give you the night off tonight, so that you may enjoy some time with your friends. It is only necessary for you to come during the day now," Charlie informed Hiccup.

Hiccup nodded slowly, not really liking the idea of only coming during the day. Sure, it meant less time with the dragon, but Hiccup couldn't get as far with him during the day as he could in the night. Still, he didn't argue with him and decided it was best to keep quiet.

Toothless watched Charlie warily as he started to turn around, not having more to say. Hiccup could understand why he wouldn't stay, especially with the Night Fury in such a stance, but he felt that it was rude to leave so abruptly.

Ron watched his older brother leave, then turned to face Hiccup. "I watched you with that dragon. It was pretty cool," he said, a grin on his freckled face.

Hiccup laughed lightly, pushing Toothless' head slightly, making him give up his protective stance. "Yeah, finally. I just can't get

through to him," he replied, muttering the last part to himself.

Ron chuckled and grinned. "Well, you've got that one, so I'm sure you'll be able to handle the Horntail. Compared to yours, he's a baby," he exclaimed.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. He could tell that Ron was in total awe of his best friend, which was fair enough since the Night Fury was a rare and dangerous dragon. Hiccup didn't think that the Hungarian Horntail actually registered on the same scale as Toothless, but Razor Neck was much harder to train. It didn't help that the keepers were keeping such a closer eye on him so he couldn't do anything on his own. He really didn't like how they were doing that. Trying to learn the secrets of the trade.

Ron looked at Toothless thoughtfully for a moment, Hiccup could see that he was also looking at the saddle and the red material tail. "Are you two going to go for a fly soon?" he asked curiously.

Hiccup shrugged, looking at Toothless. The dragon gave Hiccup hopeful eyes. Hiccup laughed and pushed his head away lightly. "Yeah, I suppose so. I've been trying to work out a way to go out with Razor Neck too, but nothing seems to be strong enough to keep him in line," he explained.

Ron nodded slowly, glancing back to where the Hungarian Horntail was sleeping in the arena. "You could always use a really long piece of metal, like the one he's chained to on the floor."

Hiccup shook his head, not liking the idea at all. He'd thought of it, of course, but he was quick to turn it down when he realised that Toothless would be carrying the weight and not him. He needed something light, yet strong. Something which Hiccup could use to control the other dragon, yet allow him some freedom. "I need something light since Toothless needs to be able to fly, too, you know," he explained.

Ron put his finger to his chin thoughtfully. "You could always use some magically reinforced leather. It would be strong, light and long enough for the dragon," he suggested.

Hiccup snapped his head up, liking the idea. But he also didn't like the idea of having something from the wizards near his best friend that could possibly be both dangerous and stupid. Toothless looked to Hiccup, wondering what he thought of the idea. Hiccup saw in his friend's eyes that he was alright with it, yet he could tell that Toothless didn't want anything to go wrong.

"Is there a way to make sure that nothing could go wrong?" he asked.

Ron nodded. "Of course. You'd have to ask Dumbledore, or one of the other professors, they'd be able to cast a spell strong enough to keep the dragon under control in the air. No one else would really have the power," he told the smaller boy lightly.

Hiccup cursed inwardly. The one person he strongly disliked was the only one who could help. Of course, Ron had said that the others could help, but he knew it would be best to ask the strongest wizard there. He knew he would have to face his enemies at some point, it

just annoyed him that he would have to so soon. His father would be telling him that it's better now than later, and that putting things off just makes them worse. Hiccup knew he was right, but that didn't make it any easier.

"Thanks, Ron," Hiccup said, turning around.

Ron laughed and ran up behind them, to the front. Toothless grumbled to himself, not liking the guts of the red headed wizard. "After the tournament is over, mind showing me what's so awesome about the dragons?" he asked.

Hiccup shook his head. "You'd have to ask someone else. Toothless only flies for me," he said.

Ron looked down, sad to hear it, but beamed as he looked up. "Cool! What about Snotlout? He's got a pretty cool dragon."

Hiccup rolled his eyes and walked past Ron. "Yeah, we'll see how that works out for you. I've got to go." He hopped onto the saddle, clicked his leg into place and Toothless leapt into the air. He barely heard the whistle from Ron, but somehow it was loud enough. Hiccup laughed and leaned forward, focusing on his dragon in the sky.

Toothless roared loudly as they reached the clouds, shooting a plasma blast and separating several fluffy parts. He soared over the lake and over the castle, heading speedily towards the tower in which they were staying in. Hiccup leaned forward once more, allowing the dragon to pick up speed easily.

The two landed on the balcony lightly, Toothless stopping immediately and tucking his wings in. Hiccup hopped off and gave the dragon a hug, smiling as Toothless nudged him with his head. Hiccup looked around the room, noticing Astrid and Fishlegs who were seated by the fire, talking about something or other. He also saw the twins playing some form of board game...but the pieces appeared to be killing each other. He rolled his eyes, he'd heard of the game from Ron and his friends but had never played. Apparently it looked worse in a life like situation, whatever that meant.

Hiccup joined Fishlegs and Astrid's conversation, sitting beside Astrid. Toothless settled beside the fire, shoving Meatlug and Stormfly out of the way. Hiccup rolled his eyes before giving his full attention to the conversation between the Vikings.

"Hey, Hiccup. How was training?" Fishlegs asked.

Hiccup shrugged lightly. "It was alright. But I don't have to go in tonight...or ever again after dark, actually," he replied.

Astrid made small cheering sounds. "That's great! Did they say why?"

He shook his head. "No, they didn't. But I didn't really want to know why."

The other two Vikings nodded, before they continued their previous conversation. Apparently they had been invited to some activity in the Gryffindor Common Room, yet they weren't sure whether they should

go or not. Hiccup wondered when they'd been offered, or if he was allowed to go.

"It could be a trap," Fishlegs said.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "A trap to get us to do \_what\_?" she asked snarkily.

Fishlegs paused for a moment. "Well, Harry's there. He could be trying to see if we can tell him more about the first task," he seemed pretty pleased with the answer too.

Hiccup laughed. "Well, I'd think that it would be Ron who would tell Harry first, you know. He does spend a lot of time with the dragons, especially because of his brother."

Astrid nodded, agreeing with Hiccup. "Fishlegs, face it, you're just nervous about being around the wizards. You don't think they would hurt you, do you?" she asked lightly in a teasing tone.

Fishlegs frowned and turned his head away, turning a shade of red that made Hiccup laugh. "No, not at all," he muttered unconvincingly.

Hiccup grinned and shook his head. "It's alright, Fishlegs. I think we should go, though," he added.

Astrid gave Hiccup a strange glance, wondering why he'd agreed to go. Surely he'd be the last one to want to hang around a bunch of wizards such as them? Especially around Harry, the one whom Dumbledore was making him train the dragons hardest for. She didn't say anything, though Hiccup knew that such thoughts would be passing through her head. They always were when it came to him.

Hiccup stood up suddenly, leaving Fishlegs and Astrid on the ground. Toothless lifted his head to watch Hiccup for a moment, before closing his eyes and hitting the floor again. Hiccup smiled at his best friend, before heading off to where he kept his belongings. He rummaged through his chest and grinned as he pulled out some supplies for random things which Hiccup would choose to make. He just wanted something to do, and this seemed like the perfect idea.

He walked over to the balcony, the spot which provided the most light. He pulled out the sketches and started to draw on the leather, sketching the shapes for the leash. He would make it before taking it to the headmaster for spell casting.

After a while, Hiccup felt the presence of a larger being. He turned around, looking into the green eyes of Toothless. The dragon looked at the leash for a moment, before curling up next to Hiccup. He grinned and turned back to his work, making sure that the leash would be able to fit with the saddle. He took the saddle off of Toothless, checking the points which he could actually tie the leash onto, and made sure there was no lasting damage to the saddle structure.

Once he was satisfied with the design, he began to make it, with the little supplies he had brought with him. Toothless made sounds every so often, though he was in his dream state, so they weren't directed at Hiccup. He found himself laughing as the dragon twitched, obviously having some sort of interesting dream.

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><p>Harry didn't know what to expect. He'd been looking up past Tournaments, but every single one was incredibly different from the last, not giving him any idea on what was to come. It didn't help that both Ron and Hermione knew what the first task was, yet they weren't saying anything. They were being incredibly cryptic about the whole thing, and Harry hated it. It was as though they <em>wanted<em> him to fail.

It wasn't just the Tournament that was bugging Harry, though. He was also worry about how his name could have ended up in the Goblet to begin with. Even though that was the least of his problems, it was still at the back of his mind. Part of his subconscious was telling him that the dreams of the snakes had something to do with it, and Voldemort.

He also couldn't stop thinking about a certain one legged Viking boy. Ever since he'd found out that Hiccup didn't kill dragons he'd been ecstatic, though they'd hardly seen each other. Hiccup always found some way or another not to be at the Great Hall. The other Vikings were always there, especially Fishlegs, who had his nose in wizard books most of the time. But never Hiccup. It was as though he was avoiding the wizards. Harry didn't like to think like that, though, maybe he was just busy.

The Gryffindor's had organised some sort of gathering, with Fred and George having the great idea to invite the Vikings. So of course, the wizards were all waiting anxiously to see if they would show. Harry sort of hoped they wouldn't - they could be pretty scary - but a small part of him hoped that Hiccup would show. It would be cool to see the Viking on his own terms, in his part of the tower.

Ron walked through the doors, making people in the room look up. They all went back to their activities, relaxing when they realised it was just Ron. Harry rolled his eyes and ran over to Ron happily, followed quickly by Hermione. The three sat beside the fire together, not saying much besides the usual polite greetings.

"I just saw Hiccup, they're going to the tower. Did you guys invite him here, or just the other Vikings?" Ron asked.

Hermione shrugged slightly. "The invitation was extended to all of the Vikings," she replied.

Ron nodded happily. "That's cool. Do you know when they should be here?" he asked.

Harry and Hermione both shook their heads. "Nope, just said before dinner today. They have time," Hermione told him.

The group moved their conversation from the Vikings and started to talk of their work load and school and such. Harry avoided bringing up the Tournament, knowing all too well that his friends would just veer the conversation away anyway. It was as though they just didn't want to talk about it, that they were worried. Harry needed to know why. What could make them act that way just by speaking about a task they weren't even taking part in?

"They give us too much work," Ron complained.

Hermione laughed. "When you want to do well, Ron, you'll understand that there isn't enough."

Ron and Harry groaned unhappily. "Only you, Hermione," Ron muttered.

"Well, it's my opinion, of course it's only me," she retorted.

Harry leaned back against the couch and gazed into the fire. Just a few nights ago he'd been talking to Sirius through it. Some of what he'd said had surprised him, some of it was pretty self-explanatory. The fact that someone had put his name in the Goblet for a specific reason was something he already knew. What he didn't know was that when Voldemort was at his peak, he'd had alliances with the Vikings. That meant that they were at the top of the suspect charts for a while. Harry had looked into it with Hermione and found that they only did it because Voldemort threatened to kill all the villages and their inhabitants.

"What's the matter, Harry?" Ron asked, changing the topic yet again.

Harry sighed and looked up at his friends. "Not much, just thinking of the tasks," he replied quietly.

Instantly Hermione and Ron paused. Harry glared at the ground, disliking their silence immensely. "I get that you guys can't tell me, but you don't have to be so awkward about it," he snapped.

Hermione paused for a moment, her emotions getting the best of her, Harry knew it. He didn't really care that he had hurt her with his words; that was just the way that he was. "Harry, we would love to tell you..." she trailed off quietly.

"But you can't. I know," Harry was irritated, his temper flaring. It wasn't that he was mad at his friends, he was just mad at his situation. He was too worried about the whole thing with Voldemort, the Vikings alliance, the task, and everything was just getting to him. It was all too much for the fourteen year old. Harry couldn't help but let some of the stress he'd been dealing with out on his friends. He would apologise later, of course.

Hermione looked down, Ron looked away. "We're doing our best here, Harry," Hermione whispered.

Harry sighed to himself. "I know. I just..." he trailed off to himself.

Before anyone could say anything else, there was a knock at the door. Harry could hear the Fat Lady painting talking to the visitors, so Harry knew it had to be the Vikings. None of the other wizards either knocked or talked to the Fat Lady.

Fred and George snickered to each other in the corner. Harry instantly wondered what they had planned for the unfortunate Vikings. He sat up and watched as a first year opened the door for the Vikings. There weren't as many as Harry had been hoping, Astrid,

Fishlegs, Snotlout and the twins. In saying that, he'd been hopping that Hiccup would tag along, but apparently not.

Ruffnut and Tuffnut ditched their friends and ran over to where the Weasley twins sat. Harry put his hand to hit forehead briefly. This just wouldn't end well for the Vikings. They clearly had no \_clue\_ who the Weasley brothers were. It was unlikely that the two Vikings would come out unscathed.

Harry watched as Fishlegs stood awkwardly at the door, whilst Snotlout made his way towards some of the Quidditch team members. Harry noticed that they seemed to already know each other, and wondered how they'd gotten to that stage.

Astrid walked towards Harry and Hermione, her intent clear in her blue eyes. Harry watched as Fishlegs tagged behind her lazily, appearing to not know where to go.

"Hey, Hermione. How's things?" Astrid asked as she reached the couch they were sitting at.

Hermione smiled and hopped off the couch, standing at Astrid's level. The two exchanged greetings, as friends. Harry wondered when the two had managed to get so close, they barely saw each other.

"Going good, thanks, Astrid," Hermione replied happily.

Harry looked at Fishlegs, looking sort of out of place. He sighed and gestured for the Viking to take a seat. Fishlegs muttered something under his breath, Harry didn't understand it â€“ it was in their native language.

"Where's Hiccup?" Harry asked Fishlegs.

Astrid appeared to be listening in, for she was the one who replied. "He's upstairs, working on something or other."

Ron laughed. "Of course he is..." he trailed off. Because apparently Ron knew Hiccup better than anyone else, Harry thought bitterly.

Astrid shrugged. "Yeah, well, he told me that he might come down later, depending on the weather," she explained.

"The weather?" Harry asked. What had the weather got to do with staying \_inside\_? These Vikings got weirder and weirder every day. He would have liked to have seen Hiccup too, but his chances weren't very good. It was likely that the one legged boy wouldn't show his face in the Common Room, too nervous and what not.

Astrid shrugged. "Yeah, he likes to be outdoors when the weather's nice," she explained, though Harry had already guessed that this was what she meant.

Ron grinned, as did Hermione. "Staying up there with anyone else?" Ron asked.

Fishlegs gave Astrid a wary glance. She ignored him, as usual. "Well, yeah, of course. Wouldn't want to leave him alone," she said, smirking. Apparently this was her way of making fun of someone when

they weren't here. She was probably better at doing so when they were.

The turret was filled with an ear piercing screech suddenly, the sounds coming from outside. Several Gryffindor students hurried to the window to see what the commotion was, but Harry could tell from their faces that they hadn't seen anything. It was becoming progressively weirder around the Common Room: Harry had heard the same screeching sound nearly every day, though he hadn't a clue as to what it was.

Astrid grumbled under her breath, before straightening and turning back to Hermione. Harry wondered whether the Vikings were really hiding something, other than their knowledge of the first task was. Of course, he thought to himself, he knew they were hiding something before, but it was becoming more apparent to Harry that it was something big. He just couldn't figure it out.

A few minutes after the Vikings had settled into the Common Room, Fishlegs included, there were thudding sounds coming from the stairwell. Instantly, most of the Gryffindor who were sitting in the room hopped up to investigate. They swung the portrait door open, but there wasn't anything.

Harry pushed through the crowd to the outside, looking up the stairwell. As he couldn't see anything, he cursed under his breath. This would have been a perfect opportunity to get answers.

Just before Harry and the rest of the Gryffindor went back inside, Harry heard someone running down the stairs. He looked up just as someone collided with him, tumbling onto the plateau of the stairs. Harry clutched at the back of his head, now throbbing, and glared up at his attacker, who happened to be awkwardly lying on top of him.

Harry looked up, surprised to find that it was Hiccup. The thin Viking boy barely put any weight onto Harry, which surprised him further. Harry looked into Hiccup's green eyes for a moment, before the Viking mumbled an apology and struggled to his foot.

Hiccup leaned down and offered his hand to Harry. Harry himself was too stunned into silence that all he could do was accept the hand and take to his own shaky feet. There was some laughter behind Harry, and he knew that they were laughing because Hiccup had knocked down their champion, but Harry didn't care. He couldn't help but think of how nice it had been to have Hiccup near him, even by accident.

Before Harry could say anything, Astrid punched Hiccup hard in the arm and grinned. He rolled his eyes and allowed her to drag him inside the Common Room. Harry followed behind Hermione, who was trailing behind the Vikings. He couldn't help but smile as his memory and mind played little tricks on him.

The group sat beside the fire happily. Dinner would be ready soon, so Harry knew that he should enjoy the moment whilst it lasted. He knew that the Vikings would find some way to ditch them for the meal, they usually did. Well, Hiccup did.

"You decided to show up after all?" Astrid asked lightly.

Hiccup shrugged. He looked at Astrid for a moment, giving her some sort of look. Her face instantly became one of understanding, and Harry wanted to know what it was that they had just shared. He just wished that they would tell him something.

"Yeah, couldn't spend all my time with him. Besides, he wanted some alone time," he muttered the last part. Harry could hear it in his voice that he was upset about something, and it made him curious as to who this mysterious 'he' was. The one whom Hiccup seemed to be spending the majority of his time with.

Astrid laughed. "You don't sound all too happy about that. Did you do something?" she teased, dragging her finger in front of Hiccup's face in a you shouldn't have done that sort of way. Harry had seen it for him numerous times, because of his Aunt, if he could call her that.

Hiccup glared at her. "No. he just wanted out, but I wouldn't let him. I'm sure you would have heard it," he replied, snark lacing his voice. Astrid laughed and looked away, pretending to wipe her tears away. Harry looked at Hiccup, but his face was emotionless. Well, as emotionless as a Viking like him could be.

Hermione interjected in the conversation at this point. "So are you joining us for dinner? We're leaving shortly," she asked the Vikings in general.

Astrid looked to Hiccup briefly. "Well, I am. I don't know about him," she jutted her thumb at Hiccup.

Ron laughed, looking at Hiccup happily. "We'd be happy if you joined us, Hiccup. Wouldn't we, Harry?" he asked, pointedly looking at Harry.

Harry glanced up, surprised that he'd said anything to him. "What? Hmm? You said what?" he asked, completely unaware of the situation. He'd been more focussed on the fact that Hiccup was sitting so close to him, but he wasn't going to say anything about that. He'd been distracted by it, too far gone. He was aggravated that Ron had spoken to him at all, though he supposed that if he hadn't, he would have continued to stare at Hiccup until the Viking noticed. That would have been the tip of the iceberg of a perfect day.

Ron laughed. "I was just saying how it would be great if Hiccup joined us for dinner," he replied, laughing.

Harry nodded slowly, without thinking. "Um, yeah, it would be great..." he mumbled. His thoughts were racing amongst other things, completely unrelated to the dinner. Food was the last thing on his mind. He wouldn't be able to eat with Hiccup sitting right next to him.

Hiccup laughed, much to Harry's enjoyment. "Well, then, I suppose I can try to make it," he chuckled.

Without warning, something went bang beside the group, making them all look up. Harry wasn't surprised to find that Fred had black smoke surrounding him, with George shooting him a shocked expression. Beside them, the Viking twins were laughing their heads off, rolling on the ground. Harry briefly looked to Hiccup, noticing that he was

rolling his eyes and laughing too.

"He fell for it!" Ruffnut yelled happily, wiping away her tears of laughter.

Tuffnut agreed wholeheartedly and laughed along with his sister. Harry wondered what it was that they had done. "I can't believe they were so silly!" he laughed.

Fred sent a glare towards Tuffnut, but it wasn't as effective as he would have hoped, what with the black powder covering his face. This made the Viking twins laugh even harder, if that were even possible. Harry wondered how they weren't choking by now.

George alternated between looking at Fred and the Viking twins with a mixture of shock, surprise, humour and a sense of wonder. Harry guessed that the later was because the Viking twins had managed to fool them, instead of the other way around.

Fred smirked as he wiped his face and gave the Vikings an evil grin. "Well, we're very good with payback," he said evilly.

Ruffnut laughed. "Yep, so are we. Just wait till Barf comes near ya," she smirked.

George laughed and patted his brother on the back. "I do believe we have met our match, dear brother," he said, but he gave Fred a knowing look. Harry felt it only fair to warn the Viking twins, but he also felt that they deserved a little payback. It would be sort of funny to watch too.

Hiccup stood up suddenly, walking towards the group of twins. Ruff and Tuff looked up, grinning, as Hiccup stopped in front of them. They instantly stood up and tried to stop laughing, much as it didn't work.

"What did you do?" Hiccup asked lightly, finding the situation only slightly funny. Harry himself was finding the situation hilarious. It wasn't every day that the Weasley twins were bested at their own game.

Tuffnut blinked for a moment, searching for the words. "Well, we may have convinced him that our fire cased rocks were sort of a tradition to Berk..."

"And they believed us!" Ruffnut laughed.

George sent a small smile towards her, but otherwise remained focused on his brother, coming up with different ways to get the twins back. Harry knew this was a cycle that would end up coming back to bite both parties on the butt...hard.

Hiccup laughed, rolling his eyes. "Of course they did...you realise, they aren't going to let you go without some form of payback?" he asked.

Tuffnut high fived Ruffnut happily, as though they'd won the lottery. Harry couldn't begin to understand how this set of twins worked. He barely understood the Weasley ones. "We're counting on it," Tuffnut said.

Astrid walked over to the twins and laughed as she took in the Weasley's appearance. "Well, you sure did a good job. Better than anything you've done to Snotlout," she remarked.

Ruffnut laughed. "Well, I think convincing him that he was dying was pretty good, myself."

Tuffnut nodded, agreeing with his sister. "Well, of course. I mean, come on, putting grass in his pants? Priceless!!"

Harry had a feeling that this would go on for some time, but he didn't mind. It was funny to watch how the Vikings interacted with each other. They didn't seem worried about fitting in, or what the other Vikings would think of them. Especially not the twins. If anything, they wanted people to think badly of them. What was with that?

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><p>Hiccup couldn't believe that the twins had managed to trick the wizards. It was funny, hilarious even. He couldn't help but laugh as he sat down at the table ready to eat the feast with the wizards. He'd decided to tag along for this one, just because Harry had asked so <em>niceley</em>.

Just after they'd left the Common Room from the wizards, Hiccup had been up to see if Toothless had settled down any. He hadn't, which made Hiccup want to leave him to calm down that much more. The dragon just wanted to fly, but Hiccup knew that it was too dangerous in broad daylight. The dragon was having a bit of a hissy fit, and Hiccup knew it would take him a while to calm down. If he was still in the funk when he returned after the meal, he would think twice before taking the dragon out for a flight.

The meal commenced and Hiccup dug in happily. He watched as the twins replayed the events of the prank to Snotlout, over exaggerating the hand movements to make it seem better than it truly was, but none the less, it was accurate. Snotlout didn't find the story as funny as everyone else had, but the twins didn't seem to mind.

Hiccup focused on his meal, not really wanting to talk to anyone else. He did feel bad about leaving Toothless all on his own, but he was being a bit of a drama queen. It annoyed Hiccup when he acted like such a baby, but he was still his best friend, no matter what. Hiccup wouldn't change that for the world, and he didn't think that Toothless would either.

Feeling a tap on the shoulder, Hiccup turned around. Hermione, the one seated next to him, on the other side of Astrid, looked at him. "How's things going?" she asked curiously.

Hiccup had to admit, he didn't like her very much. She'd been nosy, always getting in the way of things. She hadn't met Toothless, but Hiccup knew that she knew he was there. It aggravated him that she knew about the dragons in general. He would have much rather have just kept it secret from her but Ron wasn't helping. Hiccup didn't mind Ron interfering, his brother worked with the dragons, but Hermione was just a nosy girl who couldn't keep anything to herself.

"It's going alright," Hiccup managed to reply, struggling for words. He couldn't explain anything about the dragons to her, Harry might have been listening, and Hiccup couldn't let him have the advantage of knowing what the first task was. That wouldn't be fair to the other champions.

Hermione nodded, seeming to understand that she wasn't getting anything out of Hiccup for the time being. She returned her attention to her food. Hiccup sighed deeply, happy that she had given up talking to him. It annoyed him that all she wanted to talk about was the dragons. That part aggravated him more than he would care to admit.

When the meal was finished, the Great Hall echoed loudly with a very certain high pitched scream. Hiccup put his hand on his head as he groaned, glaring at the table. Toothless wasn't getting any fish tonight, this behaviour was getting annoying. He understood that Toothless was a dragon, but Hiccup knew that Toothless knew that this was too important for him to blow his cover.

Hiccup glanced up, looking around the room. Some of the wizards were looking around curiously, as though the sound had come from inside the hall. Hiccup laughed inwardly at the people, but it was only because he knew where the sound had actually come from. A certain dragon which wasn't in his good books for the time being.

As he looked around, his eyes hit the angry ones of Dumbledore. He instantly knew that Dumbledore didn't appreciate having the dragon interrupt the dinner in such a way, and knew that nothing good would come out of it. Yet Hiccup couldn't bring himself to care. He grinned playfully at the headmaster, a teasing one, one that said come at me, bro, before turning towards a disapproving Astrid.

"What?" he asked.

She gave him a look, one that said, are you serious? "What? You're asking me 'what?'" she said, disbelieving.

Hiccup shrugged. "It's not a big deal," he said.

She gave him a shocked look. "And if someone actually heard where it came from?" she asked.

He rolled his eyes. "Then he wouldn't be very happy. He knows how to look after himself," he assured her.

Astrid gave him a pointed look. "Really?"

He sat up straight and stood up. "Right. Good point." He walked quickly out of the Great Hall.

Just as he was about to leave, he was stopped by none other than Malfoy and his goons. Hiccup groaned and stepped around them, only to be pulled back. He fell to the floor heavily, earning a few snickers from the group.

"Right where you belong. At my feet," Malfoy sneered.

Hiccup glared at the ground as he rose to his feet shakily. The group

of goons all laughed, egging him on. Only this time, Hiccup wouldn't be the one taking the bait. He had had enough of this group, enough of them picking on every single thing about him. Was it not enough that they constantly pushed him over? Seriously, that was the only thing they did, until they were shouting unkind words, which, as Hiccup thought, were similar to every other time they'd had a run in. Couldn't he come up with anything original?

"Well, it's better than staring constantly at the pimple on your neck. Oh, wait, sorry, that's your head," he said lightly, a smile playing at his lips. It wasn't a friendly smile, it was more of an I'm going to get you back sort of smile. Once the first task was over, Hiccup would show the whole school just how powerful the Vikings were and they would never think to aggravate them again.

Malfoy glared at him, Hiccup smiled sweetly. He turned on his heel and walked back to the Slytherin table, while Hiccup did a little cheer inside his head. He grinned and headed out of the Great Hall, walking down the corridor towards their room.

Along the way, Hiccup wasn't surprised to bump into Toothless. He was waiting patiently at the bottom of the stairwell. Upon closer inspection, however, it appeared that Toothless was having a stare off with a cat. Hiccup rolled his eyes and approached the dragon. Toothless barely looked away from the cat for a moment. Hiccup laughed slightly. This was always funny to watch.

Someone was walking down the corridor, and from the shape, Hiccup knew that it wasn't a student. He watched as the caretaker of the castle, Argus Filch, stopped and glared at Hiccup. He'd met Toothless before and didn't like him very much, but he tolerated him. Toothless, however, didn't like the caretaker at all.

"Your pet shouldn't be around the corridor," Filch spat nastily.

Hiccup shrugged. "He goes where he wants to," he said, a slight murmur coming from Toothless in agreement. So what if he was mad at the dragon? No one could stay mad at Toothless for very long, especially Hiccup.

Filch walked angrily towards Hiccup, his hand pointed and raised. Hiccup would have been nervous that he was going to use magic, but he'd heard that Filch couldn't use any. Apparently he was some squib, whatever that meant.

"Your pet isn't allowed out of the assigned room," Filch announced. Hiccup rolled his eyes. Because he could contain Toothless?

"Yeah, right. Have you ever tried to tell him what to do?" he asked, slightly amused.

Filch grinned, but it wasn't a nice one. Not the sort of smile that Hiccup liked. "No, but I'd bet that I would do a better job than you."

Hiccup stepped aside and gestured his hands towards Toothless. "Be my guest," he said.

Filch swallowed nervously and approached the near black but blue dragon. Hiccup laughed inside his head as the dragon lost concentration on the cat and snapped his eyes up to the caretaker. Filch was surprised by the sudden movement and leapt back. He glanced towards the cat, before sending a glare at Toothless.

"Mrs Norris! What have you done to my poor cat?" he asked, dashing towards the little cat. Well, little was a bit kind. The cat was fat.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and walked towards Toothless. The dragon looked up and gave Hiccup big eyes. "Maybe next time, Filch," he said, then gestured for Toothless to head up the stairs. Filch grumbled angrily as he ascended the stairs, causing Hiccup to laugh. This was going to be good.

## 7. Chapter 7

There were two days before the First Task and Harry was feeling progressively worse. The other champions were all acing their classes, smart enough to know what the Task would be and what they would have to do. Harry was barely passing. He couldn't cast many spells perfectly and his accio just wasn't working. Hermione had been helping him practise, and he had gotten advice from Professor Moody, but nothing seemed to be working. The best he could do was summon a pencil sitting than a metre away, but even then it would drop at his feet. He just wasn't very good at magic in general.

Ron and Hermione didn't act as though they were hiding anything anymore, and Harry was forever grateful. They were trying to play it cool, he knew that, but none the less, he was thankful that they were trying for his sake. Hermione was looking for ways to help him with the task, even though she knew she wasn't supposed to. Harry was proud of her; she was going against the rules for him.

The only plus side to this whole thing was that Hagrid was taking him to see what the First Task was. Harry didn't know whether to be excited or not, but it was a good thing regardless. He would at least be getting a heads-up, that way he would know what to train for. Perhaps he could tell the others. As soon as the thought came into his head, he erased it. They were pinning badges with Potter Stinks all around the school. It wasn't very nice for Harry, the other champions didn't deserve this sort of help from him.

Harry knocked on Hagrid's wooden door. It felt like ages since he'd been there, to see the half giant with whom he'd become so close to. He had been too busy with his school work to really sit down and chat with Hagrid and even now he wouldn't be talking for long; he'd be going to see what the First Task was.

Hagrid opened the door, beaming. He looked down and ushered Harry inside. "You brought the cloak?" he asked quietly. Harry nodded, rolling his eyes as though 'of course'. He'd been told that he had to bring it, and he would have anyway, because how else was he supposed to sneak back into the tower?

The two went inside the cottage briefly, exchanging general pleasantries. "Always a pleasure to see you, Harry," Hagrid said cheerfully.

Harry nodded. "Of course," he smiled. He did miss the half giant when he didn't see him for however long. He was so strange, with his passion for all sorts of creatures. He always managed to have something dangerous which he loved. The arachnids – let's not go there, Harry thought with a shiver, remembering what happened with Aragog, their leader, in the Forest during first year

Hagrid smiled and offered his dog, Fang, a piece of steak. "That should keep him entertained. Shall we?"

Harry nodded. "Of course," he replied, following behind Hagrid as they left the hut.

The two approached the Forbidden Forest and Harry covered himself with his father's invisibility cloak. Hagrid barely looked down as the boy disappeared, knowing he would still be beside him. Harry followed as they passed trees, weaving through the Forest. He'd had so many bad experiences with this Forest. It wasn't one to take lightly.

Harry heard voices. At first he thought that it was the Centaurs, but he could also hear the sounds of something else, something much larger. He nervously followed Hagrid as they moved towards the noises. There were also lights, which Harry could see as they were approaching.

Laughter could be heard as they got closer still. Hagrid stopped behind some bushes and motioned for Harry to stay there and watch. Despite Hagrid not being able to see, Harry nodded.

Harry peeked over one of the bushes, and almost fell onto the ground in shock.

There, in the clearing, were a group of cages. Inside the cages were dragons.

Harry felt himself begin to hyperventilate. He couldn't fight a dragon! He didn't know enough to be able to control his magic, to do something that a dragon wouldn't be able to fight. From what he'd heard, they were strong creatures that didn't listen to anyone. Of course, he knew that the Vikings didn't kill them...did that mean there was another way for Harry to complete the First Task?

Hagrid walked confidently towards the centre of the group, where a gathering of wizard was formed. Harry could see Ron's brother, whom he'd met briefly once, inside the group. It made sense, now that he thought about it. Charlie worked with dragons, and here was a bunch of them.

Harry watched the conversation between the dragon men and Hagrid before scanning the area and looking at the dragons. He didn't know much about them off the top of his head - that was Hermione's thing - but he knew enough to know that they were all dangerous. The game creators had gone all out this year.

Most of the dragons appeared to be settled in their small cages, but there was one which stood out. It was a large, green coloured dragon. Its head was held proudly as it stood on its two legs. Its tail was swinging warningly around his body, his teeth bared. Harry could tell

he wasn't a happy chappie and he knew he wouldn't last long, especially not with this one.

The group split apart for a moment, Hagrid moving towards one of the dragons. Harry stepped closer, trying to hear what they were saying. It wasn't like they would be able to see him or anything.

"- see the dragons soon," one of the keepers said, making Harry wonder as to what they were talking about.

Hagrid nodded. "Ah, yes. How's it all going, anyway?" he asked, sounding genuinely curious. Of course, Harry thought. Hagrid loved dragons; had all his life. That made sense now.

Ron's brother nodded, but Harry could tell that something was holding him back. "It's all good. We're just having a few issues..." he said.

Hagrid looked up, his eyes blazing with both worry and curiosity. "How so?" he asked.

One of the other keepers gestured to the dragon that was standing high and proud. "The Horntail, we just can't seem to get through to it," he explained.

Hagrid glanced at the Horntail with a look of awe. Harry would have laughed, but the Horntail seemed to look directly at him. He swallowed and moved, the eyes of the dragon following his every move.

None of the keepers noticed, Harry was thankful, but they did look up. Harry looked up too, hearing a familiar whistling sound shooting towards the clearing. Harry had heard the sound all too often, yet he'd never understood who or what it was.

There was the loud, ear piercing screech, before a loud explosion lit up the sky. A purple light spread in a circular pattern, leaving Harry stunned on the ground. He watched as a large black creature shot towards the ground. He wanted to run forwards, to warn the wizards, but they were looking up with annoyance. Hagrid looked in awe, but he always did around danger.

The large black creature landed lightly on the ground, barely making a sound. Harry tumbled back as he watched with wide eyes at what was happening. He couldn't believe his eyes. There was a dragon standing in the middle of the clearing, just near the people. The keepers didn't look very happy about it, either. They looked incredibly annoyed. Harry had to wonder why.

Harry looked at the large black creature in fear. It was large, majestic, long and silent. Its movements couldn't be quieter if it tried, well, Harry thought bitterly, it probably could, but he wasn't about to think about why it would need to.

The dragon opened its mouth and growled loudly at the keepers, making them jump back. All the dragons in the cages stood up instantly, listening to the black dragon. Harry knew instantly that this was the leader of the dragons, the one who could control them if all else failed.

Hagrid looked at the black dragon with a small smile on his face. Harry laughed at him. Of course he would be thinking of that sort of thing! Hagrid just loved dragons. Harry couldn't understand why though. Of all things to love.

"Easy there, bud. It's alright," Harry heard a somewhat familiar voice. He looked around, searching for the source of the voice. He found it, in the one place he never thought he would. Hiccup was sitting on top of the dragon. Harry almost fainted with fright.

Hiccup hopped off the dragon and placed his hand onto his nose. The dragon immediately lifted his head to meet the boy's hand, causing Hiccup to grin. The large beast was practically putty in Hiccup's hands! Harry was shocked, to say the least. Was that what they did to the dragons now? Made them into pets? Harry could feel some sort of resentment towards the treatment, though he couldn't bring himself to hate the boy. He found himself admiring the boy, that he was able to tame such a creature.

"Hiccup! What a nice surprise," One of the keepers said, in anything other than a pleasant voice. Harry found himself disliking the man already, just for talking to Hiccup that way.

Apparently, though, Harry wasn't the only one who was protective over him: the black dragon hissed and curled himself around Hiccup, making it clear that he wasn't going to let them touch him. Hiccup calmed the dragon down instantly, just by talking to him in a hushed voice. Harry knew that this dragon would do anything for Hiccup; it was more than just having him controlled. Hiccup hadn't forced the dragon to do anything, it was all free will. This concept was new to Harry, but he liked it. He was proud of Hiccup.

Hiccup turned back to the keepers. "Thought I'd just drop by," he said lightly.

Ron's brother stepped forwards and smiled. "Always a pleasure, Hiccup. But we've already put the dragons to bed," he said, implying very much so that he didn't want Hiccup around. Harry got the sense that the keepers were intimidated by the small, one legged boy. He couldn't help but find it hilarious.

Hiccup shrugged as he looked around at the dragons, all standing tall and watching the black dragon curiously. "Well, it appears to me as though they aren't asleep."

One of the other keepers looked around, as though noticing for the first time that the dragons were all standing tall and awake. He muttered a curse under his breath but looked back to greet Hiccup happily. "Shouldn't be a problem," he said. Harry didn't understand why they disliked Hiccup so much. How could one hate a boy like that anyway?

Hiccup sighed. "Look, I just came to give some fish to Razor Neck, and then we'll be off. So please, let's not get nasty about this? I've had enough to deal with today without you three ruining the rest of it," he snapped, making the dragon hiss at the keepers. Harry wondered how Hiccup had found the dragon, or, more to the point, how they had come to have this relationship. He also realised that he didn't care, just that he hoped the dragon wouldn't get in the way of

their own relationship...if there would ever be one.

Charlie laughed and moved aside, giving Hiccup access to one of the cages, the one containing the Horntail. Hiccup smiled and walked forwards. Harry wanted to leap out and tell Hiccup that it was too dangerous, that he should go back and leave the dragon alone, be safe. But he couldn't. He took one step too far already.

The black dragon swivelled his head and his eyes immediately pinned onto Harry's. Harry blinked rapidly, hoping he was imagining it. But no, the black dragon was staring directly at Harry, green eyes locked onto his own. Harry could see a sneer forming on his lips, his teeth showing. He didn't like Harry, that much was clear. Harry moved back slowly, the green eyes following his every movement. Once he was back in the bushes, out of hearing range, the black dragon nodded his head to himself and followed Hiccup.

Hiccup looked at his dragon briefly, before reaching into the saddle bag. The black dragon waited patiently for Hiccup to fish out whatever it was that he needed, not moving. The dragon was quite a nice little creature for Hiccup, but Harry doubted anyone else could control him.

Harry watched as the Horntail leaned forward, sniffing Hiccup's hands. Hiccup pressed the fish forward, into the Horntail's mouth. The dragon sniffed it, making sure that nothing was wrong with it, before dragging it out of his hands and throwing into the air. He caught it and swallowed the fish whole, causing Harry to laugh out loud quietly. It wasn't loud enough for any of the wizards to hear though, of course.

Hiccup laughed and gave the Horntail another piece of fish. The black dragon nudged Hiccup in the back, probably asking for some of his own. Hiccup chuckled and whispered something to him, which Harry couldn't hear from where he was. Harry assumed that the dragon would be receiving some fish later, though, from the happy looks the dragon was sending Hiccup.

The Horntail made a few clicking sounds, before it surprised Harry. In all the time that he'd been watching the dragon, it had been poised and proud, but it lowered down onto the ground, tucking in its legs and covered its head with its large wings. Harry realised that it had just put itself to sleep. Hiccup laughed gently at it, whispering something, then getting onto the black dragon once again.

Hiccup sent the keepers a wave before the dragon shot off into the sky, his wings making the whistling sound which Harry had heard so often before. Well, at least he knew what the sounds were.

Harry decided he'd seen enough. He walked back towards the castle quickly and even more to his Common Room. He knew his friends would have waited up for him, of course. They knew that Harry would be facing dragons all along. Of all the creatures to be up against, it had to be dragons. How was he supposed to deal with them?

As soon as he reached the Common Room, Hermione and Ron leapt at him, bombarding him with questions. Most of them involved which dragons he liked the most, who he saw, how they acted, what he would do with them. That sort of thing. Hermione did suggest that he ask Hiccup

some tips on how to befriend the dragons, but Harry knew that that was not the way that Hiccup dealt with them. He controlled them, nothing more, and nothing less.

"I don't know how I'm going to be able to finish the task, though," Harry mumbled.

Ron and Hermione instantly shut up and looked at their friend, a mixture of emotions running through their eyes. They knew before Harry did, yet they couldn't tell him, and that made them sad. They also felt bad for their friend because they wouldn't be able to help him very much. That really annoyed them.

Hermione put her hand onto Harry's shoulder lightly and smiled reassuringly. "Harry, you've gone up against Voldemort, numerous times, a basilisk and a werewolf. You can handle a dragon," she said.

The way she said it did make Harry feel a bit better. He still didn't have a clue as to how he would be able to get past the dragon, though. They were fast and they could see Harry even with the invisibility cloak. Harry shivered as he remembered the blazing green eyes from Hiccup's black dragon. They were scary eyes, that was for sure.

"But what if it's not good enough? What am I supposed to do?" Harry asked.

Ron patted his other shoulder lightly, trying to be supportive â€“ but this was Ron. It didn't work. "What did Mad Eye tell you?"

Harry paused for a moment. He looked up and out the window thoughtfully. "To use what I'm good at," he murmured.

Hermione nodded. "And what are you good at?"

Harry looked around for a moment, not sure what he was. "Flying, Quidditch...um, that's about it."

Hermione nodded. "Right, well, why don't you use your broom to fly past the dragon?" she suggested.

Harry jerked his head up, an idea suddenly popping into his head. "Accio!" he said, louder than he'd intended, and he hoped that none of the other Gryffindors had heard his loud shouts.

Hermione grinned. "Exactly. Looks like we've got our work cut out for us," she said smugly.

Harry grinned too, liking the idea. Though they would have to work, he had a chance. And that was enough for him to be happy.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup sighed. It was the morning of the First Task and he wasn't sure how Razor Neck would go. He still wouldn't let the keepers near him. They were preparing the dragons for the arena, attaching the collars and such to them, but leaving them in their cages. Hiccup could only approach the dragon with Toothless behind him, but that made him feel safe, so he didn't mind.</p>

The rest of the Vikings were done and were sitting in the stands to watch the Task. Hiccup was almost done, but he had to stay with the keepers to help switch the dragons over between the turns. He knew that the keepers were doing this to stop him from interfering with the turn, but he couldn't help the way he felt. Dragons shouldn't be treated like this.

Hiccup sat with Toothless as they waited for the announcers. The first dragon was already in the ring, the Swedish Short Snout. Fishlegs had done a fabulous job of training the dragon. He only struck when the attacker made moves towards the egg, rather than just moving to defend himself. Moon Finger was smart in himself, he knew that this was the real deal and that he couldn't mess around as he had been with Fishlegs during training.

Toothless curled up beside Hiccup, allowing him to lean back. Hiccup smiled and leaned against the wings of the dragon, gazing up at the sky. Toothless purred slightly, the sound coming from his throat, as he nudged Hiccup. Hiccup smiled and nodded. "Yep, as soon as the day's over, we are taking a long flight," he said, making Toothless give a happy sounding bark.

Hiccup smiled and looked around. None of the keepers were there since they were all too afraid of Toothless, and with good reason. He was a pretty scary dragon when he wanted to be. Toothless could kill from a distance: he had deadly aim.

After a while, Hiccup could hear the sounds of a bell. He knew that now was the real thing. The Tournament had begun. He tried to turn his attention elsewhere, knowing that the dragon in the ring was about to get pounded. Toothless watched his rider, knowing that he was uncomfortable. He gave Hiccup a lick along his side, trying to cheer him up.

Hiccup grinned and tackled the dragon's head into a head lock. Toothless was quick to get out of it and pounced on Hiccup, trapping him beneath his strong legs. He stared into Hiccup's eyes triumphantly and Hiccup gave a groan of surrender. Toothless gave a throaty laugh and hopped up, sitting onto his back legs and giving Hiccup big eyes.

Toothless watched as Hiccup kicked some dirt from the ground at him, then kicked some dirt of his own at Hiccup. The boy laughed and kicked some more dirt, making Toothless flap a wing against the air, sending a mass of dust flying towards Hiccup.

Hiccup coughed and waved the dust away, sending a small glare at Toothless. He always seemed to find a way to win their games. It was just the way they were. But Hiccup didn't mind. He would rather lose to Toothless than beat him, because the one time that had happened, Toothless didn't talk to him for an hour. It was horrible. Not that the dragon talked to him usually, but he was more subdued that normal and didn't want to play his usual games with Hiccup. So Hiccup learned quickly that the dragon should win. Not that Hiccup ever could now. The dragon was stronger and wasn't going to let Hiccup win so easily.

There were more sounds from the arena, including a very angry sounding dragon. Toothless grumbled and leant down, covering his ears

with his paws. Hiccup sighed and walked towards him, putting his hand on his head reassuringly. Toothless barely made any acknowledgement that Hiccup was there, he was too busy hiding the fact that one of his fellow dragons was in the arena, probably being injured.

"It's alright, bud. The keepers may be idiots, but they won't deliberately injure the dragons," Hiccup said. Toothless opened his previously closed eyes to look at Hiccup. Hiccup smiled gently and nodded, assuring him. Though Hiccup also needed the reassurance, he felt it more necessary to help with the dragon.

One of the keepers, Charlie Weasley, walked out of the arena in search for Hiccup. He wasn't surprised to see that Hiccup was leaning against Toothless, but his irritation was evident. He walked over angrily, a scowl on his face. "We have to change the dragons over. Common Welsh Green next," he said.

Hiccup nodded and hopped to his feet. Toothless stood up and shook his scales, following Hiccup. Grass Glow was waiting patiently in his cage for something to happen. Astrid and Stormfly had explained to him that this was the important day, that after this, he wouldn't have to do much so Grass Glow was prepared to give it his best shot.

Grass Glow was let out, a silver chain the only thing stopping him from moving around. Hiccup attached the silver to Toothless' saddle, having made an attachment for it previously. He had originally made it to fly Razor Neck, but he'd never gotten the chance. Perhaps after the First Task.

Hiccup walked Grass Glow towards the arena. The dragon huffed proudly, steam bellowing out of his nose. Hiccup smiled and let him walk into the familiar arena of his own accord. He knew what to do. One of the other keepers walked in and took the metal chain, casting a spell so that it would lock.

Once Grass Glow was secured, Hiccup and Toothless went back to a shady patch of grass behind the arena. Toothless sat down, allowing Hiccup to lean up against him. Hiccup sighed heavily and rested his head on Toothless' paw, leaning mainly on the grass, staring up at the sky.

"This competition is stupid," Hiccup muttered.

Toothless made grumbles of agreement. Hiccup laughed at him slightly. Of course Toothless hated the competition, the keepers weren't exactly being nice to his fellow dragons. He also didn't like how his Viking was putting his life on the line for their tournament. It wasn't fair in Toothless's eyes.

"They seemed to be doing an alright job without us," Hiccup said. Toothless gave him a pointed look and Hiccup laughed. "Ok, so maybe they weren't. But did they really need us?" Toothless shook his head thoughtfully, looking up at the sky. "I mean, it's not like they actually want us here. Those keepers are making it clear that they don't."

Toothless nudged Hiccup's head, trying to calm him down. Hiccup smiled and gently scratched the dragon's head. Toothless mumbled appreciatively, but he knew that Hiccup was still wound up.

Hiccup sighed against Toothless. The dragon leaned against the ground, his eyes watching his Viking warily. He always worried for Hiccup, there were so many things that could go wrong with a person like him. Toothless knew that Hiccup was one of the most poorly designed Vikings, but he still cared for him. He looked after his Viking more than any other dragon did.

The Welsh Green was led back into his cage, much to Hiccup's surprise, fairly clean of wounds. He greeted the dragon and comforted him, calming him down as he settled back into his cage after the round. Toothless watched the exchange from behind, not wanting the scare Grass Glow any more.

Charlie told Hiccup to lead the Chinese Firebolt out next. Hiccup nodded and went to the cage with the large dark dragon. It eyed Hiccup before allowing him to touch him. Hiccup smiled and opened the door, letting the large dragon outside and into the larger area. He waited patiently for Hiccup to grab the chain, before he followed behind carefully.

Despite the trainer of the Firebolt, Fire Starter was pretty well trained. Hiccup had to assume that it was because Snotlout was such a harsh guy on the dragon, he was happy to be in the safe hands of Hiccup. Hiccup could understand that, Snotlout did work his dragons a bit much, but his methods usually worked, especially with Hookfang and his fiery temper.

Charlie and Kingsley took the position and tied Fire Starter to the arena floor. Hiccup watched the dark dragon give one last look towards him, before resuming an attacking stance. Hiccup had to hope that the wizard going against him wouldn't create any lasting wounds, but he knew it was wishful thinking.

Kingsley came walking over to Hiccup after watching some of the round with the Firebolt. His face looked grim, and Hiccup automatically assumed the worst. "Harry's got the Horntail."

Yep, there it is. Hiccup swallowed loudly. Razor Neck was the least trained of all the dragons. He was wild, couldn't care less about where his shots were fired. He would probably love to kill the one reaching for the egg. Hiccup wished that he could give Harry some tips for how to deal with the dragon, but there was nothing that he could do. Nothing to prevent what was to come.

"Can't he swap?" Hiccup asked. Toothless nudged his head under Hiccup's arm, demanding attention, trying to take his Viking's mind off of Harry and the dragon, but it didn't seem to work. Hiccup was worrying about the safety of a wizard. This was one of the few things that he never actually thought he would have to deal with.

Kingsley shook his head. "No. its set, once it's drawn out of the hat, that's the dragon that they face," he replied.

Hiccup shivered slightly. This wasn't looking too good for Harry. He walked over to the furious dragon and looked up at him. Razor Neck looked down hotly, his breath coming out in scorching puffs. Hiccup sighed and reached his hand up, trying to get his head down.

Razor Neck crowed loudly and refused, shaking his head and clicking his tongue. He was beginning to get difficult again. Hiccup looked to Toothless for help, but Toothless was too busy hissing at the larger dragon.

Hiccup gently placed a hand on his best friend, telling him that fighting wasn't good. It wasn't going to help, either. Toothless looked to Hiccup, before looking back at Razor Neck. He hissed again and Hiccup sighed.

"Come on, bud. He's not worth it," Hiccup said.

Razor Neck leapt forwards in the cage, barely shuddering the bars, making moves to Hiccup. Hiccup leapt back, slightly fearful, as Razor Neck pounded against the bars, trying to reach the boy.

Toothless jumped up and leapt straight for the bars, hissing and screaming at the dragon contained. Hiccup didn't have the strength to tell him to stop, he was too busy bringing his breathing back to a regular pace. It wasn't every day that he was attacked by a huge dragon such as this one.

Razor Neck leapt for Toothless, hissing and screaming, flaring his brilliant, sharp wings. Toothless was having none of it, snapping his powerful jaws, flaring his own black wings, standing on two legs to get more height.

Hiccup watched Toothless' swing his tail back and forth, his agitation shown through that. Toothless hissed and Hiccup watched in shock as he prepared a plasma blast. He shot the purple blast at the ground, making Razor Neck jump to avoid being hit by the rebounds.

Toothless sneered at Razor Neck and clawed at the bars, to no effect â€“ the bars were enchanted. He hissed angrily and shot another blast at the ground. He was skilfully missing the dragon, still in his conscious mind, knowing that harming this dragon could mean dangerous penalties for his Viking. He still knew that Hiccup was his top priority in this whole thing.

That was the main reason that Toothless was fighting Razor Neck anyway. Because he had threatened Hiccup and that was a no go. Toothless would not allow anyone to touch Hiccup in a bad way, he just wouldn't. He was his.

Charlie and Kingsley stormed over to Hiccup angrily. Toothless didn't turn around, his attention still on the fight. Hiccup looked at them, his expression worried.

"Can't you get them to stop?" Charlie demanded, over the noise.

Hiccup shook his head. "They won't listen to me now. They are too deep in their fight," he replied.

Kingsley glared at Hiccup. "Well get them to stop before they end up killing each other."

Hiccup looked at the fight. "He's just protecting me. He knows what will happen if he hurts Razor Neck," he said assumingly. He knew that

Toothless would do the right thing. He was a smart dragon.

Charlie glared at Hiccup, then Toothless, then back again. "Well do \_something\_," he snapped.

Hiccup sighed, but shook his head. "There's nothing I \_can\_ do. Unless you plan on throwing yourself between the fight, I suggest you wait until he has shown his dominance over Razor Neck," he explained.

Before Hiccup could say anything else, Charlie gripped Hiccup and pulled him close to his body, pinned against him. Hiccup tried to escape, but the wizard held firm around his neck. Hiccup glared out, looking at Toothless. He knew that this was Charlie's way of getting the dragon to stop.

"He's not going to -" Hiccup gasped as Charlie pressed further on his throat, cutting off his air.

Toothless turned around at the sound of his Viking's distressed voice. He narrowed his eyes on Charlie and strode forwards purposefully. Charlie took a few steps back, dragging a wheezing Hiccup with him. Hiccup looked to Toothless with begging eyes, not liking this position at all.

Charlie looked down at Hiccup, the hatred that he'd felt for so long showing in his eyes. Hiccup glared up at him, but he couldn't look directly up or turn, because of the force on his neck. "Perhaps this should teach your \_pet\_ a lesson," he spat the word 'pet' as though it was vermin, but Hiccup couldn't bring himself to care much.

Toothless, however, did. He growled loudly and crouched into a fighting stance, wings flared, teeth bared, claws outstretched. He flicked his tail behind him and Hiccup knew that Charlie was in for it now and for once, Hiccup didn't want to stop the fight. Charlie deserved it.

Charlie held strong, but his body was shaking just a bit. Hiccup rolled his eyes inwardly, too busy focusing on the fact that it was difficult to breathe. His grip loosened and Hiccup took a deep, much needed breath. Toothless glanced at his Viking briefly before aiming a plasma blast at his head.

Toothless didn't get the chance to actually shoot the blast, as a stream of boiling fire shot past his head and towards Charlie. It missed Hiccup entirely, catching the head of the wizard. Hiccup was released and he fell to the ground heavily.

Hiccup watched as Charlie glared at him, his head dark from the fire remains. He had to laugh, it was pretty funny.

As soon as Hiccup was released, Toothless ran over to him and protectively covered his body with his wing. He looked down with his head to make sure that Hiccup was alright, nudging him with his nose. Hiccup smiled and gave the dragon a rewarding smile.

Hiccup looked around as he stood up. His eyes trailed over to Razor Neck, who wasn't furiously looking at Hiccup, rather at Charlie. Hiccup walked towards Razor Neck and reached his hand tentively

towards him. He knew immediately that this dragon had been the one to shoot the fire at Charlie. He was protecting Hiccup, just as Toothless had been. He felt a sense of pride for the large dragon.

Razor Neck looked down at Hiccup, looking along his body and checking for wounds. Hiccup had to smile, Toothless had already beat him there. He met his hand at the cage, clicking his tongue happily. Hiccup smiled and gave him a scratch behind the chin, just where he could reach.

Jeremy approached Hiccup, for what seemed to be the first time in a long time. He looked apologetic and stopped just near Toothless. He'd met the Night Fury several times, but he hadn't stopped to actually acknowledge him before. Hiccup wasn't surprised, all the three keepers had been assigned a dragon to look after, Charlie just happened to have two. Not that he really looked after Razor Neck at all.

"Sorry about him, he's just a little bit on edge at the moment," Jeremy apologised.

Hiccup shrugged and stepped up next to Toothless. "He was just trying to break up the fight," Toothless grumbled anyway, not liking how his Viking was taking this so lightly. He was just ATTACKED! Surely that warranted some annoyance of his part. But Toothless knew that Hiccup wasn't the one to get angry. Much.

Jeremy shook his head, looking at the Horntail. "Well, we're all under a lot of stress right now."

Hiccup nodded slowly. "I know. Doesn't exactly warrant him to choke me," he added.

Jeremy looked down, ashamed for his fellow keeper. "We're all stressed. Him especially."

Hiccup scoffed. "He's not the one who has to worry about Razor Neck screwing up all the time."

"But he does. Harry's facing him." And just like that, Hiccup paled. He knew that Harry was going to have to face one of the dragons, and he wasn't happy about that, but facing Razor Neck? That wasn't a good thing. Firstly, Hiccup couldn't be sure if the dragon would attack wildly without thought, secondly he knew that the dragon wouldn't stop once Harry had gotten the egg.

Hiccup sighed and looked at Toothless briefly. "He's not the only one that's worried, then."

Jeremy shrugged slightly. "His mum is making him take extra care because of Harry. She'll freak when she finds out that Harry's facing the Horntail."

Hiccup hadn't heard of the mum before, but he could tell that she was one of the worrying ones. Hiccup didn't have a mum himself, so he didn't know what it felt like, but his dad was overprotective of him.

"Well, he won't be the only one, I stand by that," Hiccup said,

referring to Charlie.

Jeremy nodded. "Yeah. You would be too, I assume. I heard you were friends with him?"

Hiccup shrugged. "Well, I think so, but I can't be sure. We're close enough for me to be worried about whichever dragon he faced," he explained.

Jeremy gave Hiccup a sideways glance, before saying, "Well, he is a pretty important wizard."

Hiccup didn't question it, he'd heard it before. He just didn't know what Harry had done to make him so famous. It must have been something pretty impressive, with the care that the wizards were giving him, Dumbledore especially. He didn't seem to have many friends, but Hiccup figured that that was his own choice.

Jeremy turned his gaze onto Razor Neck. Hiccup looked up too, hoping with all his energy that he would behave and Harry would come out unscathed. He didn't know what he would do if one of his friends was injured because of his dragon. Well, it might be Harry's fault for entering the Tournament in the first place, but it didn't mean Hiccup wouldn't have felt bad if Harry got himself injured because of it.

"You might want to talk to Charlie," Jeremy said, walking away.

Hiccup glared at his retreating figure. Talk to him? After the way that he just treated him? No way. No way. Toothless agreed wholeheartedly. He didn't want his Viking putting himself in any unnecessary danger.

The Firebolt finished his round, and Hiccup sighed. It was time to finally put Razor Neck to the test. Hiccup hoped that he wouldn't do anything rash, anything which could jeopardize the safety of Harry or the wizards around him.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry swallowed nervously as Viktor Krum came through the tent doors and back out to his numerous fans, a golden egg in his hands. It was his turn. He knew which dragon he was facing, the Hungarian Horntail, the fiery dragon which Harry had seen earlier. It still haunted him, and now he was facing it.</p>

There were loud roars, ones that came from the Horntail, Harry assumed. They stopped for a moment and Harry was given the 'go ahead' look from someone in the tent. He didn't recognise the guy, but he knew that he was just here to help make sure the Tournament ran smoothly.

Harry nervously pulled out his wand, his fingers shaking, and stepped into the sunlight. Immediately, the people filling the arena stands clapped and made it known that they were cheering Harry on. He looked around. The field was once used for Quidditch, his favourite sport, but had been turned into a rock field.

He glanced at the centre where a dragon, the dragon, was attached

to the ground by a long metal chain attached to his neck. The Horntail hissed at him, catching his eye and baring his teeth. Harry watched warily as the dragon flared his large brown wings in a menacing manner and brought his head up to maximum height, standing on his two legs proudly. He was clearly enjoying not being in the cage, Harry thought bitterly.

The dragon made a sound from the back of his throat, before a red flame was thrown in Harry's direction. Harry barely moved out of the way in time. He grumbled to himself, crouching behind the rock as though his life depended on it. Well, it sort of did.

Harry pulled his wand into a casting position and cast his spell. "Accio Firebolt," he said. He didn't know if it worked, but he prayed that it would. He'd been getting pretty good at it, but he wasn't sure if the pressure would get to him and decrease his casting ability.

The dragon made confused sounds, and Harry took this to his advantage. He leapt out from behind the rock quickly and moved to a closer one. He spotted the egg and a plan formed inside his head. He crouched behind the rock, waiting for the dragon to look somewhere else. He hoped that he would, at least.

A whistling sound was heard and Harry looked up. He grinned when he saw that his Firebolt was flying towards him. He reached out his hand and grabbed it as it landed at his feet. He hopped onto it and shot into the air.

The Horntail instantly looked up and aimed his fiery breath at Harry. He darted around, avoiding the flames. He was good on a broom; it was where he felt at home. He could do anything with his trusty...broom. Yeah, that didn't sound great, Harry thought to himself.

In the air, Harry knew he had a shot at defeating the dragon. He eyed the egg and made a quick turn in the air, rushing towards it. The dragon was surprised and moved out of Harry's way.

Harry reached out and missed, his fingers scraping the gold paint of the egg. He groaned and stopped the broom, turning back to face the dragon. This time, the Horntail was prepared as Harry made his swoop for the egg. He stood in front of the egg and shot another blast of fire towards Harry.

Quickly moving away, Harry managed to avoid the blast. The Horntail crowed loudly and screamed at him, flaring his wings and standing over the egg, his wings on either side. Harry groaned to himself, he was just going to make this harder for everyone.

Harry shot towards the egg, trying to make the dragon move, but the Horntail was having none of it. He'd learnt his lesson. Harry was thrown wildly out of control as the Horntail hit him out of the sky with his wing. Harry gained back the control of his broom and was able to keep in the air, for the time being.

Whispers and gasps flowed throughout the arena, worried for Harry. He wasn't able to use any other spells, everyone in the arena knew that he wasn't good enough. Well, most did. There were the few that thought highly enough of Harry to be able to defeat even the toughest of dragons.

Harry made another attempt at the egg. The Horntail blinked, and in that moment, Harry knew he had a chance. He sped up and reached out, grabbing the egg with both hands. He shot as far away from the dragon as fast as he could, climbing into the air. Harry grinned and held up the egg proudly, looking down at the dragon.

The Horntail flicked his tail furiously, but otherwise remained calm. He stayed still on the ground, seeming to realise that he had lost. Harry felt almost bad for him. The treatment mustn't have been very good for the dragon, and he was just in a situation where he felt threatened.

Harry landed on the arena ground, his egg in hand, as he waited for the arena to empty. He was allowed to go straight back to the dorm now, and that was what he planned on doing.

He walked towards the tent again, his broom in one hand and the egg in the other, then went inside. He was instantly engulfed in a hug from Hermione, a pat on the back from Ron and a pleased looking Dumbledore.

"Good work, Harry! You showed that dragon a thing or two!" Ron said happily.

Harry shrugged. "It did a number on me too, though," he said.

Hermione laughed and pulled back to look at him. "Doesn't seem too bad. Come on, let's go get you cleaned up."

Harry followed happily as they walked back to the Gryffindor Common Room. He knew that his fellow wizards from the house would be inside the room already, but he didn't want to face them. He just wanted to rest and sleep. Too much excitement for one day.

"That was quite the performance, Harry," Ron grinned, his voice showing the awe he felt towards Harry.

Harry looked down, embarrassed. "It was nothing. I just imagined that I was on the field. It was easy that way," he explained.

Hermione nodded. "It would work, I guess."

"Blimey, 'Mione, it did work," Ron said.

Harry laughed. "Guess so."

They started to laugh as they entered the Gryffindor Tower. Harry followed Hermione and Ron up the stairs and towards their room. He wasn't surprised in the slightest when cheers erupted as they entered.

Harry made his way to the stairwell where the rooms were located and waved to everyone. There were groans throughout the room, wanting Harry to stay and chat. Ron and Hermione made their way through the sea of students, telling the others that they should let him rest.

"You can shower him with praises tomorrow," Ron said

helpfully.

Laughter filled the room and Harry laughed. "Thanks, Ron. Really nice of you," he said.

Ron rolled his eyes and followed Harry as they went to their room. Hermione waved good bye and disappeared into her own.

The two wizards sat on their beds, conveniently placed next to each other, and Harry started to talk about what he'd seen, not just with the Horntail, but with Hiccup and his black dragon.

Ron started to say something, but held back, trying to let Harry find out on his own. Harry groaned, but understood. It was probably best for Hiccup to tell him anyway. That at least would give him a reason to talk to him, Harry thought happily.

## 8. Chapter 8

Harry stared at the ceiling, his mind wandering. Thoughts he never wanted in his head were taking up a position at the front. He'd had another dream, one which had been reoccurring for a few nights now, but he wasn't going to share it with his friends; they already knew the basics.

Ron was already up and dressed for the day. Harry couldn't care less what he had to do, he just wanted to stay inside and away from people. But of course, that would never happen since he had to face the day at some point. And he was hungry. Food would be served soon, he hoped.

It was the weekend now, a long day off. That meant Harry had the whole day to do as he pleased with his friends, and to do absolutely nothing which involved seeing people other than them. He turned around in his bed and sighed as his muscles groaned. He was stiff from his previous days efforts, flying on the broomstick had never seemed so tedious and draining.

Harry stood up and stretched, clicking his joints into place. He proceeded to change into his robes and head into the Common Room. He wasn't surprised to find other Gryffindor students still inside, breakfast not being available for a while. Some looked up and congratulated Harry, others looked too tired to pay attention.

Fred and George Weasley came over to Harry and slapped him on the back, grinning like the fools they were. Harry had to admit, for fools, they were pretty cool. They were Harry's favourite members of the Weasley family, after Ron, of course. Ginny was his favourite sister from the family â€“ she was the only girl. Pretty too, but she wouldn't notice him.

"Great work, Harry!" Fred cheered, his grin infectious and making Harry grin.

"Thanks guys," Harry said.

George laughed. "Have you opened the prize yet?" he asked, leaning in, curiosity taking the better of him.

Harry shook his head. "I'm going to wait for a while," he replied.

The twins both sighed and hung their heads for a moment, before returning to the grin. They could never be mad for long, or disappointed, as the case may be. "Don't forget to tell us what's inside," George said.

Harry nodded. "Of course. When I know what it means, of course."

"Of course," they agreed together, grinning and walking away, a skip in their step.

Harry shook his head, smiling. He liked the twins, they were always fun to talk to. Never a dull moment. And their inventions were pretty handy too, not that he'd really used them to get out of class. Sometimes the pranks had gotten the better of him, though.

Harry found Ron and Hermione sitting in the corner of the room, near the window. They were talking, but not about anything that Harry wasn't allowed to listen to — their voices didn't stop as Harry sat down.

"Morning, Harry," Hermione said as she turned to look at him.

Harry smiled at the two. "Morning, guys."

Ron nodded and said his greetings to his friend. "You feeling alright? You were out like a light last night and still sounded asleep when I woke up."

Harry chuckled lightly. "Yeah, just tired. Still tired now, but feeling better."

Hermione nodded. "That's good, Harry. A good night's rest was probably what you needed anyway."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Playing doctor now are we?" he grinned.

She turned away, embarrassed. Harry put his hand on her shoulder and turned her back around.

"It was a joke, Hermione. Don't worry about it," he said.

She blushed slightly, her cheeks turning a slight shade of pink. "Oh. Of course."

Harry thought her reaction was strange, but said nothing of it. Perhaps she had wanted to become a doctor once, before finding out that she was a witch. Oh well, Harry didn't need to know. She was his friend, he trusted that she would tell him what he needed to know.

Hermione stood up abruptly, her previous embarrassment vanished. "Breakfast. Come on, we'll be late."

Harry grinned and stood up. They headed towards the hall for the meal happily, talking about pretty random things along the way. It was turning out to be a pretty good day, Harry thought.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup lounged about in his room the next morning. He'd watched Harry's round and decided that it would be alright to do absolutely <em>nothing</em> for a while. The keepers had claimed the victory of training the dragon, and Hiccup couldn't care less. He was just happy that all of it was over and he could relax for a while, before they would be heading back to Berk.

The other Vikings were doing pretty much the same thing as Hiccup, though they had left the room to go and have some lunch. Yeah, it was that late already. And all Hiccup had done in the morning was draw a picture of a lazy dragon. Toothless didn't mind any of it, but he had some ideas concerning flying later. Hiccup wanted to go out as well, but he didn't know if it was a good idea.

Hiccup sighed and leaned against the wall. Toothless lifted his head and looked him in the eye, wondering why he didn't sound happy. Hiccup smiled at Toothless, resting his head against the wall. He was exhausted; all the emotions were getting to him, the late nights of stress, the hard days at work with the dragon, and it was all catching up with him. Toothless seemed to understand, much to Hiccup's happiness, but the other Vikings did not. They had dragons which were easy to train and Hiccup got stuck with Razor Neck.

Toothless hopped up from beside the fire and walked over to the balcony window. Hiccup smiled and pushed himself off the floor, standing and walking towards the dragon. Toothless made some gestures towards the sky, and Hiccup looked at the ground. Everyone should still be eating their lunch or insideâ€!

Without giving himself time to reconsider, Hiccup hopped into the saddle and Toothless took off powerfully into the sky. They played their famous weaving games, shot some of the clouds and glided low above the water of the lake. Hiccup bent down and ran his hand along the water, flicking Toothless with it.

Toothless grumbled and skimmed his good tail wing along the water, scooping it into the wing and then flicking it up at Hiccup. He made satisfied and smug sounds, looking up at Hiccup innocently as he wiped his face clean of the water.

"Oh, so that's how you want to play it?" Hiccup asked.

Toothless merely gave Hiccup the innocent eyes. 'I don't know what you're talking about' it said, making Hiccup laugh.

"Well, I hope you don't mind the cold!" he shouted as he stood up onto the saddle, causing Toothless to give him an odd look, as though wondering what he would do, then it clicked.

Hiccup laughed and jumped off the saddle and into the water. Toothless screamed as he plummeted towards the water and swam instantly back to the surface, using his large wings to stay afloat. He swam over to Hiccup and grumbled at him. Hiccup knew that Toothless didn't like the water, but it was funny to watch.

Toothless swam over to Hiccup, pulling the boy towards him with his

front legs. Hiccup laughed and pushed the dragon away, swimming towards the shore. Toothless overtook Hiccup easily and glanced back, a smug twinkle in his green eyes.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and kicked strongly, the cold water starting to take effect. He shivered and looked ahead. Still at least another hundred metres. Hiccup sighed angrily to himself, why did he have to jump off the dragon?\_ Genius\_.

Toothless pulled himself to shore and shook his scales, water spraying everywhere. He turned around, searching for Hiccup. He spotted him, close to the shore, and sat back on his hind legs, watching his Viking swim wildly in the water. Toothless thought that he looked sort of silly, flailing about in the water as he was.

Hiccup glared at Toothless slightly, pulling himself onto the bank of the river. Toothless gave him a smug, '\_you deserved that\_' sort of look. Hiccup merely shrugged and rung out the bottom of his clothing. Toothless followed behind Hiccup as they made their way back towards the tower, the Viking in need of a change of clothes.

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><p>Harry sat in the Common Room, his friends the only other two in the room. Everyone else was enjoying the pleasant day outside, it being the weekend and all. Harry kept thinking of the dragon, the large Horntail he'd been facing mere hours ago. His friends were no help either, saying what a great job he did and how cool the dragon looked. Well, the latter came from Ron. Harry knew about his fascination with dragons, but he wasn't about to tell him he knew Hiccup's secret. What if they didn't know? Harry shook his head, of course they knew.</p>

The egg in his lap, Harry stared at it. He hadn't opened it yet, afraid of what was inside. He didn't know what to expect, knowing the last task had involved \_dragons\_, surely the next task would involve something even more challenging.

"What's the matter, Harry?" Ron asked, looking up at him from his spot on the ground.

Harry shrugged. "Not much," he lied.

Hermione jerked her head up from her book. "You're lying, Harry, I can tell. What's bothering you?" she asked.

Harry sighed. "I just, I don't know how I'm going to make it through the second task," he admitted softly.

Hermione rolled her eyes and put her hand on Harry's shoulder. "Harry, you're a talented wizard. You just need to focus and you'll do fine," she assured him.

Harry nodded slowly, sort of unconvinced. "Thanks, Hermione," he said.

She pat his shoulder consolingly. "Why don't you open the egg?" she asked curiously, looking at the golden egg in Harry's lap.

Harry looked down nervously, the patterns on the egg making him nervous. He looked down at Ron, who gave him a nod, then pressed onto the clasp and twisted. Immediately, the egg opened and a golden glow poured into the room. Harry covered his ears when the egg started to make a horrible screeching sound. His two friends covered their ears and glared at the egg in disgust.

Harry hurried to close the egg back up, wanting the terrible sound gone. He sighed deeply when the sound disappeared and he was able to hear normally again. Hermione looked at the egg in annoyance, whilst Ron gave it a quizzical glance, strange for someone like him.

"Well. That was... interesting," Harry said.

Hermione shook her head, snapping out of her haze, before nodding. "Yeah. There must be a way for it to not shriek like that," she said thoughtfully.

Harry shook his head quickly, ridding his mind of the horrible sound. "Yeah, but we'd better figure it out soon. I would like some warning for the next task," he said pointedly.

"I had no choice! We weren't allowed to share the task with the champions!" Ron snapped.

Harry glanced down at him. "But you could have at least told me what type of challenge it was!"

Their voices were being raised during the argument, much to the point where Hermione couldn't figure out what was worse: the egg or her friends fighting. She sighed and interrupted the conversation before it could go any further. "Guys! We don't need to talk about this! It's done now."

Harry and Ron stopped instantly, looking down, ashamed. "Sorry, Hermione," Harry said.

Ron nodded. "Sorry, 'Mione."

Hermione nodded smugly. She hated her friends arguing in front of her.

"We don't have anything until dinner. Anyone up for a round of Wizard's Chess?" Ron asked.

Hermione shook her head and lifted her book up, gesturing she would rather just read. Harry nodded and beamed. "So long as my pieces don't try to kill me instead."

Ron laughed and hopped up from the floor. "Well, no promises," he said as they made their way to the chess board on the tables. They both set up their own pieces, Harry's a spare set borrowed from the kit, while Ron used his families. At least they liked him. It wasn't fair that Harry nearly always lost because his pieces would try to turn on him.

Harry sat opposite Ron, the black pieces waiting for his command. Ron grinned at Harry from across the board, the white pieces looking ahead at Harry's in a threatening manner. Harry still couldn't believe that the Wizard Chess pieces were pretty alive. It was pretty

cool. Even though they couldn't move without their player telling them where to go, they were still full of attitude.

"Pawn to B5," Ron instructed clearly. Immediately, the white pawn on the B line moved forward two spots and stood still.

Harry looked down at his own pieces. "Knight to H6," he commanded. The black horse and rider moved over the pawn towards the empty spot, above the pawn of lane H.

The game continued as such, Ron taking numerous pieces. The first to go was his pawn, then his bishop. Harry took Ron's castle, followed by Ron taking Harry's own castle. Ron then proceeded to put Harry into check, which lost him his Queen. Harry didn't realise that by taking the Queen, he was putting himself into check mate. Yeah. His pieces weren't pleased with him at all. But he could understand it at least, they were all sore losers.

Ron and Harry shook hands, Harry admitting defeat to his friend. Ron grinned. He always won. Harry didn't mind; he just liked watching the pieces destroy each other.

Hermione hopped up from the couch and walked over. She looked at the graveyard of a chess board and then to Ron, giving him a congratulatory smile. "Good work, Ron, as always."

Ron grinned. "Why, thank you," he said.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Should we be getting ready soon?" he asked.

Hermione looked at her watch briefly. "We still have twenty minutes. But yes, then we can get a good seat."

Harry and Ron both gave her a pointed look.

"What?" she asked, confused.

"We sit in the same spot every dinner! It's not like we have anything to worry about," Harry replied, laughing gently.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Sure. Anyway, I'm putting my robes on now. You guys should get ready too." Then she disappeared into the girl's dormitory.

Harry glanced at Ron, shrugging briefly, before they too left the room to get changed. Harry didn't realise that their chess game had gone on for such a long amount of time, but apparently, dinner was in twenty minutes.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup rested his chin on his hand, his elbow propped against the wooden table in the Great Hall. He and the rest of the Vikings were rather early for dinner, but none of them seemed to mind. Hiccup knew that the wizards would be coming in at the last minute, as seemed to be the gist of things around here.</p>

The other Vikings were all talking about the things that they had done during the day, spending time with their dragons and racing in

the Forbidden Forest. Hiccup wasn't about to tell them what he'd done, they'd probably think he was mad, jumping off Toothless into the freezing cold water. Astrid would have given him a stern talking too that was not something he needed.

"We totally beat you!" Snotlout yelled, bringing Hiccup out of his lonely thoughts.

Astrid scoffed. "Sure, and my name isn't Astrid Hofferson."

Snotlout scowled. "We did! Hookfang crossed the finishing line first," he insisted.

Fishlegs put his hands up, cutting in. "I saw the whole thing with my own eyes. Stormfly crossed the line first. She won."

Snotlout grumbled. "You're just saying that to get on her good side."

Astrid glared at Snotlout. She reached across the table and punched him, hard. Snotlout rubbed his arm, giving Astrid a look of disbelief, amongst other things.

Hiccup chuckled to himself. His cousin was such a moron sometimes. Yet, he couldn't help but think that Snotlout was a good member of the team, even if he did want to do things his way. His way was also the way that would get them all killed.

Hiccup watched as the hall slowly filled with students. He paid little mind as they sat in their seats, and continued listening to his friends. They had moved on from the race (it was decided that it was a draw) and Astrid wasn't happy, but at least she hadn't lost.

Once the hall was filled, Dumbledore announced the feast begin, causing loud chatter to sound throughout the room. The Vikings instantly filled their plates with the food in front of them, pleased with the generous amounts they'd been given. The other wizards didn't eat as much as they did, but then again, they didn't do as much work as they did. Hiccup knew that if even one of the wizards tried to do the work the Vikings did daily, they wouldn't survive. They were too weak, skinny, just bones and it wasn't a good thing.

Snotlout ripped a chunk of lamb off the bone and started chewing it loudly, making smacking sounds as his teeth covered the meat. Astrid glared and shook off the pieces that had landed on her, shooting him death glares. "Oh, sorry, did I get something on you?" he asked, his mouth still full of food.

Astrid smirked and grabbed at her carrots. "No, you didn't," she said before throwing her carrots at Snotlout, hitting him straight in the mouth. She grinned and fist pumped the air.

Carrots. Snotlout's worst nightmare. He hated carrots â€“ loathed them, even â€“ and he'd just inadvertently eaten one.

Snotlout grimaced and proceeded to spit out all his food onto the plate. Astrid laughed and flung another one at him. He dodged, the carrot hitting the ground behind him. "Gross! Ew, ew, ew!" he exclaimed, trying to get the taste off his tongue.

"Now you know how I feel," Astrid smirked.

"Like a carrot?" Ruffnut asked, confused.

Astrid sighed, pointedly shooting her a glare. "Yes. Like a \_carrot\_."

Tuffnut snickered. "And how do they feel? Seriously, I wanna know."

Astrid rolled her eyes and looked back at Snotlout. "But it's not like I shot food into your mouth!" he protested.

"No. but you showed me what was inside yours," she snapped.

He glared at her and tucked a piece of meat in his palm. He lifted it and threw it quickly at her, hitting her on the neck.

"Bullseye."

"No, that's lamb," Ruffnut stated matter-of-factly.

Astrid chuckled to herself, pleased with Ruffnut's statement. She wiped the lamb off her neck and threw it back at Snotlout, hitting him in the eye. "Lamb's eye."

"More like moron's eye," Tuffnut snickered.

The twins high fived, laughing at Snotlout's expense. Snotlout scowled at them and flicked some more meat at both of them. This, of course, didn't have the desired effect and Snotlout ducked as a large potato was thrown his way, followed by several other unnamed vegetables. Hiccup ducked and placed his plate in front of him as a shield as his friends started to throw their food at each other.

Astrid scored some good ones at Snotlout, dumping her entire water glass over his head. It was enough to say that Snotlout was drenched to the core. Astrid was sitting back in her seat, laughing. The twins were still throwing things, but now just at each other. Hiccup was not surprised to see Fishlegs leaning as far away from the fight as possible.

Hiccup looked around the room, noticing that many of the students had turned around to watch the Vikings. Hiccup shrugged and turned back to his friends. It was a good thing that he wasn't hungry anymore. There wasn't any food left for him to eat. Shame.

The Vikings settled down, after there was nothing left to throw, and Astrid was done with throwing her water at Snotlout. Hiccup put his plate down and looked at his friends. Astrid had somehow managed to avoid the majority of the food, but her neck and top were splattered with grease stains. The twins looked as though they had bathed in food, numerous stains of different colours covering their clothes and the floor around them. Snotlout looked drenched and the food stuck to his top looked funny.

Hiccup shook his head and looked at the rest of the table. The wizards were still eating, they seemed to take forever to eat. The Vikings finished nearly fifteen minutes before them every day. It was

tiring for Hiccup to have to sit there every meal, unable to leave without the headmaster's permission. And there was no way was he going to approach the headmaster and ask to leave early.

Hiccup looked up as he heard the sounds of the hall door opening slowly. He briefly looked out of the corner of his eye, checking who it was, before returning his eyes to the table. He heard gasps and screams throughout the hall, shocked sounds from the students.

Harry and his two friends jumped up from their seats and moved backwards slowly, trying to make slow movements. Hiccup looked up at them, giving them curious looks. They didn't even look at him, their eyes trained on the advancing dragon. Ron had met the dragon before, yet now he seemed so afraid. Hiccup couldn't help but be slightly amused.

Looking over at the Vikings, Astrid was giving Hiccup a disapproving look. The others were all laughing to themselves, something about 'their faces' and Hiccup could only assume they were laughing because of the wizard's reactions. Hiccup had to admit, he predicted panic, but not to this level. Most of the wizards were crowding to the walls and trying not to make any sounds.

Suddenly, Hiccup felt himself pushed to the ground and out of his chair. He faked a groan, only because Toothless had caught his fall. He would make sure that Hiccup wouldn't be hurt too badly.

Screams went around the room as the small Viking was pinned underneath the near black but blue dragon. Hiccup smiled up at the dragon. Toothless looked down, his eyes large, so Hiccup knew that Toothless was in complete control. The other students, of course, did not know. They thought the dragon was attacking Hiccup. That would be a sight to see, Hiccup thought.

Toothless bent down to Hiccup's face and bared his teeth, hissing slightly. Hiccup pretended to be afraid and shuffled along the floor. Toothless predicted this and pressed his front paw onto Hiccup's leg, his metal one of course, to avoid causing him pain.

Hiccup couldn't stop a small grin from rising to his face, but covered it instantly with a scared expression. He hoped that the wizards didn't notice. Knowing how frightened they would be right about now, he didn't think they'd care too much about facial expressions.

Toothless hopped up, flaring his wings and swishing his tail behind him. A moment later, he had Hiccup in his arms, his wings wrapped tightly around his body. Hiccup struggled slightly, keeping up the façade, but it was difficult while laughing. Toothless growled and stalked out of the great hall, Hiccup still tucked under his arms.

As they were leaving the hall, Hiccup could have sworn that he'd heard Malfoy's snickering voice say, "He deserved it." But he took pleasure in knowing that if Toothless had heard, Malfoy wouldn't be alive. Therefore, it probably meant that Hiccup hadn't heard correctly.

Hiccup stayed wrapped in Toothless' wings as he was carried into the courtyard near the Great Hall. It was far enough so Dumbledore

wouldn't be able to tell him off, and the students wouldn't be able to see him.

Toothless released Hiccup and watched him, his wings limp by his side and his arms dangling loosely. Hiccup smiled and stood up, shaking the dust and kinks out from his clothes.

"Thanks, bud. That dinner was getting pretty boring," Hiccup said, giving the dragon a scratch behind the ears.

Toothless mumbled his appreciation and rolled his head, getting closer to his Viking. Hiccup chuckled and stepped up to him, rubbing behind Toothless' ears, then moving further to his wings. He knew that he would get itchy; he couldn't scratch very effectively behind his wings. Hiccup had to wonder how Toothless ever survived on his own. The silly dragon relied on Hiccup for a lot of things now.

Hearing sounds, a door opening and footsteps, Hiccup turned. He took a small step back, shocked and worried at who he saw. The headmaster was walking straight towards Hiccup, his stride purposeful and menacing. He stopped close to Hiccup, but not close enough that Toothless would be able to reach him right away.

Toothless curled his tail around Hiccup and bared his teeth, a hissing sound escaping his mouth. With his wings flared and his eyes small, he looked dangerous. Hiccup would have felt worried, but he was secure in the small circle the dragon had created around him.

"That performance was unacceptable!" Dumbledore snapped.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "They were going to learn about the dragons somehow," he said, completely at ease. Why shouldn't he be? He had a Night Fury protecting him.

Dumbledore glared heavily at Hiccup. "You could have been injured."

Hiccup stood up straight and looked Dumbledore in the eye. "You and I both know you wouldn't have cared about that," his voice was cold, strong, nothing like how he'd been talking to Toothless a moment ago.

The headmaster stood up straight and held his head proud, his eyes firm. "If your pet proves to be dangerous again, I will not come up with any more excuses as to why I let it on my property."

This was news to Hiccup. He perked his head up, his eyes holding the curiosity he felt. However, he also felt disdain and anger for Dumbledore's words. "He is a he, a dragon, and not my pet," Hiccup spat the word 'pet' as though it were vermin, a curse word. "Haven't you told people that you've been letting the Vikings stay with their dragons? Are you lying to them?" his voice was accusing, holding the accusation he'd wanted to ask for so long.

Dumbledore shook his head, his eyes holding a small glimmer of anger. Hiccup knew he was right. Dumbledore was lying, but not about the dragons. Then what about? "The professors all know now that you have brought your dragons and that they were staying in the tower."

"You should have told them when we first arrived here," Hiccup muttered.

Dumbledore nodded a small nod. "That may be so, young man, but not all the professors can be trusted. If Madam Maxime and Professor Karkaroff knew, they would have surely told their champions, creating an unfair advantage."

Hiccup nodded, understanding the logic. "It still doesn't make sense. What did they think we were doing here, if not helping for the tournament?"

Dumbledore looked away for a moment. Hiccup knew what that meant. He'd lied. Just like he lied to his students, like he'd lied to his fellow professors. Probably to anyone who asked him a probing question. But Hiccup wasn't going to let that stop him.

"You are here to help with the dragons - that is your job here," Dumbledore said at last, his voice forceful.

Hiccup held his tongue for a moment, fearful he'd say something he would regret. Finally, he came up with something. "And we've done it, we've fulfilled our part and the dragons don't need our help anymore. Our village does, though."

Dumbledore smiled, a small, creepy one. Toothless looked at Hiccup briefly before looking back at Dumbledore. "Young man, that may be so, but you are here now, to stay the year. We may have asked you for help with the first task, but now we require your assistance."

Hiccup looked up, his eyes full of worry. Dumbledore had never spoken quite like this. So darkly, as though every word a death sentence. Hiccup knew that for him, it probably was. "What do you mean?" he asked slowly.

"We realised how much we don't know about dragons. We'd like you to teach us. Well, the keepers would anyway," he said dismissively, as though he hadn't just asked Hiccup to give away the secrets of his island, their way of life, everything Hiccup had worked towards. Every piece of information the Vikings had worked so hard to keep a secret, Dumbledore was asking to expose. That was something Hiccup was not prepared to do.

Hiccup shook his head firmly. "I have worked hard to obtain the knowledge I have, it is more beneficial to learn it yourself." Though he didn't care if they ever got the information. He just didn't want them to get theirs. Hiccup wouldn't be able to cope if the wizards knew how to ride dragons. The world as they knew it would change forever.

Dumbledore looked grimly at Hiccup. "I don't think you understand, young man. You desert us, you desert the dragons."

"Why should I care?" Hiccup asked, his voice terribly cold. Toothless knew he didn't mean it, Hiccup cared more about the dragons than he would let on. Why else would he be in the horrible wizard school?

"Because if you don't, there is no reason to keep the dragons alive."

Hiccup hung his head and nodded. "Fine."

Toothless growled at Dumbledore and stepped forward, his teeth bared and a harsh, hissing sound escaping his mouth. Dumbledore watched for a moment, realised that Hiccup wasn't going to call him off, and returned to the school with a slight scowl. Hiccup sighed and called Toothless back to him.

"What are we going to do, bud? All our work, everything we've done is down the drain because I care too much," Hiccup mumbled, falling to the ground.

Toothless quickly caught Hiccup on his back, making him sit down. Hiccup smiled weakly at the dragon, sitting on the ground and against the dragon. Toothless looked worriedly at Hiccup, as though something would happen at any moment. He worried for Hiccup too much, he knew that, but at times like these, it paid off.

Hiccup sighed. "I just don't understand how he lives with it..." he whispered, the dragon nodding his head.

He smiled. "Guess nothing a nice flight won't fix." He grinned. Toothless hopped up and Hiccup followed, heading back to the dorm. Hiccup had taken off his saddle, only because he'd planned the whole incident in the Great Hall. What better way to show the wizards that Hiccup knew dragons than a great demonstration of the danger? He had a feeling that people wouldn't mess with him, coming out from the battle unscathed. What would they think if they knew that Toothless was Hiccup's friend? Wary of the dragon, he presumed.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry stared at the door in shock. He knew that Hiccup worked with dragons, he <em>knew </em>that. He just didn't think that the dragon would seek out Hiccup and attack him. He could still feel his heart racing, with fear of the dragon and fear for the small boy. Harry didn't know what was worse: facing the dragon for the First Task or seeing Hiccup being attacked by one.

The wizards were dismissed and able to go to bed. The majority of them scrambled out of their hiding places and dashed out of the room. They wouldn't have lasted a minute in the arena with the Horntail. Then again, the Horntail was relatively calm compared to the black beast that had entered their dining hall. What type of dragon would do that? Risk the exposure, the danger, all for one boy?

On their way out, Harry looked up at the dark sky. He heard the familiar whistling and searched for the black dragon. he'd become accustomed to seeing the dragon, since he'd seen Hiccup with the same one when he'd snuck in to see the First Task opponents. That got him thinking: was it the same black dragon in the hall, as the one beside him at the cages? If so, had the dragon changed its mind and tossed Hiccup aside?

"Nice ride." Harry was startled from his puzzled thoughts by Ron. He turned to look at him, and found him following the black dragon's path through the sky.

Hermione nodded. "Fast dragon," she agreed.

Harry followed the dragon's flight. He couldn't tell if there was a rider or not on the dragon, it was too dark and too far for him to tell. He guessed that there wasn't. How could someone as small as Hiccup fly a dragon like that? Something slower, maybe.

"What do you think of his performance in the hall?" Ron asked, the dragon going behind some trees.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "It wasn't necessary. He could have introduced the dragon to the hall, instead of having everyone cower in fear of him," she said, annoyed.

Harry looked at them, confused. "What?" he asked.

Ron looked to Harry briefly. "Hiccup's dragon — the one that attacked him in the hall — it was a set up."

That explains some things, Harry thought, but not everything. Like, why would he have wanted everyone to see the dragon, but not bother to introduce him to them normally? Was he just trying to frighten them?

"It wasn't very nice, he didn't have to scare everyone," Hermione said angrily.

Ron shrugged. "Hiccup needed to prove that he had friends."

"All he proved was that he couldn't hold his own in a fight against a small dragon."

Harry shook his head. "Guys, this isn't worth fighting over."

Hermione sighed. "Harry, I just don't think he went about it the right way. He could have told people, it would have made more sense, and now people are going to be paranoid, afraid that they might be next."

Ron shrugged again, unfazed. Harry knew that Ron had known about Hiccup's dragon for a while. "It's nothing, Hermione, you're looking into it too much."

"I'm not, Ron. What if someone had attacked the dragon? Hiccup would have had no choice but to defend it. Something could have gone seriously wrong," Hermione's voice had gone from annoyed to worried.

Harry sighed. "Hermione, it's not any of our business what the Viking gets up to. He can do whatever he wants with his dragon."

Ron laughed. "That's rich, coming from you," he teased, his voice taunting.

Harry looked at him, surprised. "What do you mean?" he asked, genuinely confused.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "We've seen the way you look at him,

Harry."

"It's the same way you look at Cho Chang," Ron added.

At Cho's name, Harry looked away, his face heating up.

Hermione and Ron chuckled. "Of course, you wouldn't admit to it, would you Harry?" they teased him.

Harry turned away and shook his head. He was glad that the conversation had turned away from Hiccup and his confusing performance in the dinner hall. He still wondered about what it all meant. Was Hiccup trying to show the wizards that he had a dragon, or was he trying to show them how dangerous he was? By the looks of things, very. But Harry knew that it took a lot more than a dragon to scare some wizards.

The whistling returned, but this time lower to the ground. Harry looked up as the black dragon shot straight to the ground, near where Harry himself stood. He stepped back, the air rushing around him as the dragon came to a furious halt.

Now that the dragon was close, Harry could see the rider. Hiccup looked at Harry, a smile on his freckled face. He hopped off the dragon and gave him a scratch behind the ears, something Harry never thought he'd see.

"Hey, guys," Hiccup said, a smile in his voice.

Hermione looked as though she was about to rage about his behaviour, but she held her tongue. Harry was glad for that, and he was sure that Hiccup would have been too.

"Hey, Hiccup. Been for a flight?" Ron asked, curious.

Hiccup nodded, looking at his dragon. "Yeah, Toothless needed it. He deserved it for not breaking the *faÃ§ade* earlier."

"Toothless?" Harry spoke up, confused.

Hiccup looked at him. "Yeah." Then he turned to the dragon and gestured his arms. "Harry, this is Toothless. He's my best friend, the first dragon to be trained â€“ if you can call him that â€“ and the only Night Fury," he introduced.

'Toothless' looked at Harry, his eyes big and curious. Harry smiled weakly at the dragon. He looked powerful, strong, but he didn't seem dangerous, not around Hiccup. Not like he had in the hall. He realised the dragon was different around Hiccup, that he'd never hurt his rider. For whatever reason, there was a bond there.

Hiccup looked up at the golden trio. "So, what are you three doing out here, anyway?" he asked.

Hermione looked around. She'd been caught, though not by a teacher. The feeling was still unpleasant. "We were just taking a walk. Calming down. You scared the *\_entire hall\_*!" she said loudly.

Here we go again, Harry thought angrily to himself.

Hiccup sighed. "The idea wasn't to scare people," he shared a look with his dragon which told Harry that it had been part of the plan, "but simply to show them that we have dragons. Maybe now they'll take us seriously." He had said the last part bitterly, and Harry's mind went to Malfoy.

Hermione frowned. "Well, you've got their attention now. They think that you were being attacked! What better way to show how weak you are than to have a small dragon like yours tackle you without a fight?"

Hiccup looked at her, his eyes startled, yet his face passive. "That wasn't the idea," he said, his voice quiet. The dragon lifted his head towards him, his eyes round and large. Harry assumed the dragon was doing something to consolidate him.

"Well, whatever your intention was, Hiccup, I don't think it worked," Hermione said, lacing her words with anger.

Ron looked at her, confused. "Geez, 'Mione, what's gotten into you?"

Hermione glared at Ron for a moment before sighing. "Sorry, Hiccup. I'm just...concerned, is all," she mumbled.

Hiccup shrugged. "I copped it from Astrid already, so I don't mind. You apologised though," he said, a grin on his face. Harry thought that it must be something he was remembering, possibly about Astrid. Were they together or something?

Hermione smiled. "Well, she should. Its impolite not to," she said, matter-of-factly.

Ron and Harry both laughed. "Only you, Hermione," Harry teased.

She sent them a small frown, before turning her attention to Hiccup. Harry rolled his eyes and looked back to the Viking. The small dragon was still wary of the wizards, but Harry was more so. He didn't like the look of the dragon. Remembering the way he had stared him down, making him move away from the dragons at the site, it still sent shivers down his spine.

Hiccup stepped back and the dragon moved forward to meet him. Harry watched the two. They were so in sync, as though they knew everything the other would do before they did it. Harry was in awe of their bond. He had to wonder whether Hiccup was in control, or were they friends? It seemed crazy, but with everything that he'd witnessed, it was a possibility.

"You off?" Ron asked, sadness in his voice.

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. Toothless would probably like some dinner and a bit of a night flight," he replied. "Shouldn't you be in your dorms by now, anyway?"

Hermione looked at her watch and groaned. "Yeah, it's past curfew," she was annoyed, she hated being late back to the dorm since it meant they could be caught by Filch.

Hiccup grinned. "Well, I'll see you all tomorrow, then." He mounted

the dragon and shot off into the sky, effortlessly taking flight.

Harry whistled lowly, in awe of the dragon's skill. How was it able to do all that? It was so small, yet Harry could tell the dragon was dangerous. Deadly, even. Why would anyone dare to challenge such a being?

Hermione hurried the three around and walked briskly to their dorm, making sure to keep her footsteps light to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Harry followed behind silently, not wanting to be caught either. It would be the last thing he needed; more attention.

Once inside, Hermione let out a breath. People in the room stared at her, thinking she was crazy. They knew who she was, the goody-two shoes. Harry chuckled internally. They didn't know half the things she did when they weren't around. Sneaking around the corridors, outside, helping Harry into town when he shouldn't have been. She wasn't the model student she liked to think she was.

"Night, Harry," Hermione said, ducking away through the crowd and towards the girl's dorm. Ron looked at Harry and they both agreed: time for bed.

The two went to their own dorm and removed their robes. They changed into comfortable sleepwear and shut their lamps off. Harry removed his glasses and closed his eyes, getting comfortable.

## 9. Chapter 9

\*\*I know this is unusual for me to write at the beginning of the chapter, but I would just like to say a HUGE shoutout to my friend and editor, Riya, who has helped me through HUGE amounts of writers block and brought this chapter to you guys. Chapters may be a bit slow for a short amount of time, as I will be doing my end of year school exams and such, but do not fear, she is not giving up writing (that's me, talking about myself in third person). Yeah. Hope you enjoy this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it :)\*\*

A few days passed after Hiccup's staged attack in the Great Hall, three to be exact. The wizards gave him a wide berth, afraid that if they said anything, the dragon would launch its attack on them. Of course, they didn't really know that Toothless was Hiccup's best friend; they still thought the dragon had actually attacked the small one legged Viking.

Hiccup stood on the balcony, overlooking the courtyard of the school. He hadn't been back to see the dragons yet, but his friends had. They had told Hiccup of the crazy yet funny things Razor Neck persisted on doing. Apparently he acted as though he missed his trainer. Toothless was furious because he didn't want Hiccup anywhere near the dragons, or the wizards, for that matter, but he had little to no say in the matter. Especially since Harry knew about the dragons, he'd been coming up to visit Hiccup and Toothless with his two friends.

Toothless lay on the floor of the balcony, basking happily in the sun. Hiccup watched him for a moment, before looking back out at the courtyard. There wasn't anything in particular he was looking at, but

he didn't want to be inside the room either.

The time they'd spent there felt like forever, not at all like five weeks. No, it felt more like a year. More than enough time, Hiccup thought bitterly. He'd been asked to stay, however, much to his great displeasure. He'd agreed, and now he had to deal with the repercussions of his decisions. But if it meant saving the lives of all those innocent dragons, his annoyance would have to be dealt with.

Hiccup stared at the ground for a moment, staring but not processing. It wasn't until it started waving at him that he blinked and focused. Down on the ground were his three new friends, Harry, Hermione and Ron. They could see him apparently, or they just knew that he would be up there.

He smiled as he waved back, knowing they would only be able to see the wave and not the smile. If they could see the wave at all, that is.

Toothless perked up and leaned over the railings, his body stretching like a cat. He glared at the trio before sliding back onto the ground. Hiccup smiled and lowered himself, sitting with the dragon. Toothless placed his large head in Hiccup's lap and looked up at him with his green eyes.

Hiccup smiled and gave the dragon a scratch behind the ears. Toothless mumbled appreciatively and moved closer, to give him better access. Hiccup laughed and tackled the dragon into a hug. Toothless grumbled and looked at Hiccup, now around his neck. Hiccup gave him a look, telling Toothless he should get used to it. The dragon glared and flopped his head back to the ground, forcing Hiccup to shift so he wasn't squashed.

There was a rap at the door and Hiccup stiffened. None of his friends knocked, not even the wizard ones. Which could really only mean one thing. He glanced at Toothless before standing up and walking into the living area.

Three wizards walked into the room. Dumbledore was flanked with Professor Moody and Professor Snape. Hiccup smiled gingerly in greeting, really not wanting them in the room.

"Are you the only one in here?" Dumbledore asked sceptically.

Hiccup shook his head. Toothless appeared behind him and the teachers took a cautious step back. Hiccup looked to Toothless and found out why: the Night Fury was making a vicious face towards the enemy. Hiccup didn't feel inclined to tell him off, since he was protecting him.

"Of course not," Hiccup said.

Dumbledore nodded slowly. He paused, looking at the dragon beside Hiccup. "Have you been down to help with the dragons recently?" he asked.

Hiccup shrugged. "It's not a necessity to be around dragons all the time." he said.

Professor Snape gave him a disapproving look and gestured to the dragon beside him. "Yet you bring this \_thing\_ with you everywhere you go." His voice was cool, calm, but harsh. Hiccup hadn't heard it before, and he would have been fine continuing that way.

Toothless bared his teeth slightly and growled. Hiccup put his hand up. "He's right, bud, but you're a \_nice\_ dragon." The dragon held his head proudly and smugly, giving the wizards a dirty look.

Dumbledore stepped forward, disregarding the immediate danger he was putting himself in by being near the dragon. Toothless glared at him, but did nothing. "Young man, are you aware of a treaty?" he asked. This was the first time he hadn't used harsh, demanding words, and Hiccup grew curious.

Hiccup shook his head slowly, sharing a confused look with Toothless. "I know what a treaty is...of course, we have to have one with practically every other tribe out there..." he trailed off. He \_knew\_ he wasn't completely out of the era but that didn't mean he knew which treaty these people were talking about.

Moody stepped forward and moved his walking stick. Again, his eye never left the dragon. He pulled out a piece of paper from his cloak and tossed it to Hiccup. Hiccup fumbled for the paper, but it eventually dropped to the floor.

Toothless laughed at his poor reflexes for a moment, before returning to watch the wizards warily. Hiccup rolled his eyes and opened the folded paper. He read the first few words and paled.

\*\*ALIANCE OF THE BERK TRIBE AND LORD VOLDEMORT \*\*

\*\*Signed by Chief Haddock and Lord Voldemort \*\*

\*\*THIS OATH IS SWORN AND SHALL NOT BECOME INVALID AS LONG AS EITHER SHALL LIVE\*\*

\*\*THIS AGREEMENT ENTAILS:\*\*

\*\*Lord Voldemort is willing to help with the dragon pest situation that plagues the Vikings of Berk. In return for his services, the Berk tribe will assist Lord Voldemort in the attacks against wizards.\*\*

Hiccup stared at the words in shock. Fortunately, the chief who had signed it was his grandfather, Chief Haddock. But was it still in effect? And who was this \_Voldemort\_ whom the letter spoke of? So many questions rolled through his head. Obviously the treaty didn't work. While the Vikings may have held up their part of the deal, this 'Voldemort' did not, for the dragons were still an issue when Hiccup was born.

Dumbledore watched Hiccup's face carefully, waiting for any emotion which would give him away. Hiccup quickly adopted a blank expression, then showed the letter to Toothless. Hiccup heard scoffs and laughs from the three people, but Toothless glared at the paper instead. Hiccup predicted it had something to do with the 'dragon issue'.

"It's not still valid, though," Hiccup said eventually.

Dumbledore nodded. "No, that is what I had hoped. But it would only be confirmed by you saying so," he said evasively.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Right. Because my grandfather whom I've never met would have told me. Yeah, right."

"Hiccup, your father would have known this," Dumbledore said.

He turned his gaze cool and careless. "Look, you startled him enough when you told him you were a wizard. I doubt he would have been so surprised if he knew about this." Hiccup was starting to become woozy, the idea of killing a person was horrible. Killing a dragon was one thing, but killing a person...

Professor Moody frowned. "Then you have no intent to keep this treaty?" he asked. Hiccup glanced at him and shook his head, giving him the 'duh' look.

"It was obvious...to me...that Haddock signed this to get rid of the dragon issue, and possibly to destroy buildings. However, none of the Haddocks, or any of the Vikings for that matter, would willingly sign up to kill people." He was disgusted. Toothless agreed with what he was saying.

Before another word was said, a familiar craw came from the window. Hiccup looked up as a blue and red dragon flew in. Her rider sat upright in the saddle and was staring intently at Hiccup. She glanced at the wizards and contemplated blowing them up.

"Astrid, perfect timing. You might want to stay up there," Hiccup said, his anger showing through his voice.

Astrid looked at the wizards angrily. "What are you doing here?" she demanded.

Hiccup reached up and gave her the piece of paper. She read it quickly and frowned, then looked at Hiccup. "They wouldn't do this, Hiccup. Your grandfather was a good person," she said.

"Astrid, he signed the paper." Hiccup pointed to the signature. Though muffled and inky, it was there. The clear Haddock crest. His family had signed a death warrant.

Professor Moody gave the two Vikings a glance, a calculating one. Dumbledore nodded, his suspicions apparently confirmed, whilst Snape just watched them with evil eyes. Hiccup didn't feel a strong need to talk to him. Ever.

"Isn't the fact that we had no idea about this contract enough to confirm that we had nothing to do with it?" Astrid asked hotly. She'd caught onto what Hiccup had already thought.

Dumbledore nodded slowly. "That may be so, but we still need to check that it no longer stands," he said.

Professor Moody cast Dumbledore a sceptical glance before a small smirk landed on his face. Just as it came, it vanished, leaving Hiccup and Astrid both confused. Surely they hadn't seen it.

Hiccup felt his gaze turn sour. Toothless hissed quietly at the wizards, Stormfly doing the same. "How are we supposed to know? We haven't even heard of it."

Astrid nodded in agreement. She was getting angry, and Hiccup knew that he wouldn't be able to stop her. Nothing could once she got going, not even her own dragon.

"Even if the contract is still in place, we wouldn't abide by it," Hiccup said firmly.

Professor Moody chuckled. "But you wouldn't have a choice. As long as either party lives, you can't back out. Your lovely grandfather signed this for you."

Astrid sent Hiccup a glance. It was one of confusion, and she had every right to be. "But Haddock is dead," she said, her confusion showing in her voice.

Moody scowled for a moment, before regaining his composure. Dumbledore nodded. "And you have no intention of signing the paper again, should he return?" he asked.

Hiccup and Astrid both shook their heads. The dragons agreed as well. "Of course not. This 'Voldemort' threatened to kill the dragons. We're not going to let that happen," Astrid said, giving a pointed look to Dumbledore, something he himself had done to Hiccup.

Dumbledore let out a small sigh, admitting to his wrong doings, but still kept his gaze firm. No weaknesses, apparently. No feelings, either, Hiccup thought bitterly. "That's all fine then. I shouldn't have to bother you again for a while."

He and Professor Snape left the room. Moody stared at the Vikings for a moment, waiting for Dumbledore to leave. "Are you sure you won't reconsider?" he asked. The way he said it, it was as though he wanted him to sign it.

Hiccup shook his head firmly. "Of course not."

Moody nodded turned. Just as he was about to walk through the door, his hand lingered on the frame and he half turned his head. "We'll see about that," he muttered. Hiccup wasn't sure he'd heard him right.

Toothless growled, confirming Hiccup's suspicions. The Night Fury leapt towards the door and the professor hurried out, not wanting to be near the dragon. Hiccup rolled his eyes and called his friend back. Toothless hissed once more at the closed door before bouncing back over to Hiccup.

Hiccup sighed heavily and looked at his best friend worriedly. The dragon sat up straight, wings relaxed, eyes watching Hiccup curiously. The simple gesture made Hiccup forget his worries for the moment and smile. Toothless tried again to imitate his smile, which didn't work although Hiccup would never tell him that.

Astrid hopped down from her dragon and wrapped an arm around Hiccup,

pulling him into a much needed hug. He sighed again, feeling quite stressed with the situation. Astrid pulled back and smiled. "You know there's nothing they can do to make us fight people," she said.

Hiccup looked down as he nodded. "Astrid, what if they do? What would happen then?"

Astrid put her hand under Hiccup's chin and gave a firm look to him. "We don't," she said firmly.

He smiled at her, silently thanking her for her help. She grinned and leaned briefly into Hiccup. She gave him another hug, before looking at him with determination. "Come on, then, you've been missing out on the dragons lately. You'll love what the Nadder's been doing," she said, a gleam in her blue eyes.

Hiccup grinned. "Dug a hole?" he asked, humour lacing his words.

She nodded, smiling hugely. Hiccup chuckled. "It's hilarious. The keepers have no idea of what to make of it. Priceless." She grinned.

Hiccup laughed. "Yeah, that does sound like Stringlove. She never could stay in one place without digging." He nodded.

They laughed together for another moment before Hiccup saddled Toothless and they flew out the window. Despite his hesitation, they headed towards the Forbidden Forest, and the dragons. Hopefully the dragon keepers had come to their senses and wouldn't make a scene about Hiccup's return. They were annoying enough without adding more taunting to the mix.

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><p>Harry stared at his hands at the lunch table. He had a test in the next class, Transfiguration â€“ something he wasn't looking forward to. He just wanted to be practising Quidditch, something he enjoyed more than anything, which wouldn't be happening this year because of the Tournament. He sighed and looked at his two friends. The Vikings hadn't shown, but they rarely did at lunch. It would be more surprising if they didn't show at dinner.</p>

"You alright, Harry?" Ron asked lightly, munching on some food from the table.

The boy nodded. "Just thinking about the test."

Hermione smiled. "You'll be fine, Harry. You've studied," she said positively.

He sent her a grateful smile and she grinned.

"Professor McGonagall is surely going to give you extra marks for doing great with your Task anyway," Ron said.

"It doesn't work that way, Ron," Hermione said, scolding.

Ron shrugged. "It might."

Harry rolled his eyes. "I really don't care, you guys," he said.

The other two wizards glared at each other before turning back to Harry. They decided changing the topic was probably the best idea, considering they were all a little stressed about the test.

"Did you guys see the dragon outside last night?" Ron asked excitedly, immediately jumping to dragons. Of course, Harry thought, rolling his eyes.

Hermione nodded. "It was Toothless. I bet you it was. That's the time Hiccup usually takes him outside," she replied.

Harry hadn't seen the dragon, but he'd heard it. "I do believe it was Hiccup's dragon as well. I heard the wing sounds."

Ron laughed. "It is quite a distinct sound," he agreed.

They started laughing for a second. "How is the dragon supposed to be stealthy if the wings let you know when he's close by?" Hermione asked, incredulous.

Harry laughed. "Maybe that's the point. According to Hiccup, Toothless is a dangerous dragon. Maybe it's to instil fear in those near it."

Ron snickered. "Not just Hiccup, Harry. The Night Fury is the most lethal dragon in the known universe. Some say it's the unholy offspring of Lightning and Death itself," he said smugly.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "You don't believe everything Hiccup tells you, do you? I bet the Horntail Harry fought was stronger than his little pet."

Ron faked a gasp. "You wound me," he grinned.

Harry laughed. "I don't think the dragon is all that, Ron. He didn't look as though he could even fight Hiccup."

Hermione nodded, agreeing. "He's right, Ron. Night Fury may be his species, but he's nothing tough."

Ron shook his head, smiling. "I bet you I'm right. I bet you two galleons in a fight Toothless will come out on top."

"You're on," Harry said, grinning. A bet was a fabulous idea.

Hermione shook her head, a smile playing on her face. "Fine," she agreed.

Neville Longbottom joined in the conversation, as did Seamus Finnigan. "What are ye talking abot?" Seamus asked.

"The Night Fury," Ron explained lightly.

Neville sucked in a breath. "That dragon? I never want to see it again," he said.

"What's so bad about it?" Harry asked.

Seamus rolled his eyes. "Neville thinks he saw it sneaking around the Gryffindor common room. Mind, I went down and saw nothing."

"It was there, I saw it," Neville muttered angrily.

Hermione nodded slowly. "Was the window open?" she asked.

Neville and Seamus both nodded. "Yeah, we forgot to close it for the night," Seamus said. They must have been the last in the room, Harry thought.

Hermione looked calculating. "It is possible that what you saw was him. He is a black dragon, after all," she said, more to herself than to the others.

Neville shivered. "It creped me out. I don't want to see it again." He was easily spooked.

Lunch ended and the Gryffindor group headed towards their Transfiguration class. They didn't want to be late, having the test and all. They needed to get on their teacher's good side, not that it had ever done much to help before.

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><p>Hiccup stared at Razor Neck, silently debating what to do. Toothless sat beside him, watching Hiccup curiously. The larger of the dragons breathed angrily as he watched Hiccup, wanting him to just go away.</p>

The Viking turned around and looked for one of the keepers. He found Kingsley and walked over to him, tapping him lightly on the shoulder, effectively making him jump.

"Ah, Hiccup. Please don't do that." He was startled, it was almost funny to Hiccup. He smiled slightly and looked at Toothless briefly before making up his mind.

"Sorry, Kingsley." Though he wasn't sorry at all. "I need to ask a favour," he said, getting straight to the point.

Kingsley nodded. "Of course. What do you need?"

Hiccup looked over to Razor Neck as he spoke. "Unbreakable rope, something to attach to the dragon and another piece to attach to my saddle."

Kingsley looked sceptically at both Hiccup and Toothless, then to Razor Neck. "You want to let that out of its cage?" he asked, concern etched into his voice. Hiccup wasn't too sure on what he was concerned about, however.

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. I think Razor Neck would benefit from a fly around in the open sky, Toothless should be able to hold him back as well," he explained.

Kingsley sighed. "Right, I'll see what I can do about it, Hiccup. Give me a moment."

Just like that, the keeper walked off. Hiccup turned back to Toothless and gave him a scratch before heading towards Razor Neck. The dragon crowed at him, and watched him with an evil glint in his eye. Hiccup smiled and sat on the ground near him, out of reach from anything but fire. Toothless happily sat with him, sending Razor Neck glares every so often.

After some time, Kingsley returned. He tapped Hiccup on the shoulder, effectively stirring him. Hiccup turned and faced Kingsley, who held out three pieces of rope. They looked like normal pieces, ones which they would find on Berk.

"You're sure these will do the trick?" he asked.

Kingsley scoffed. "Please, Hiccup, have some faith." He grinned and headed towards Toothless. He dropped a short piece of rope near him, the longer one somehow connecting itself to the short rope. The other end connected itself to the dragon, without anyone helping it.

The keeper then proceeded to put the last rope near the dangerous dragon. It latched onto Razor Neck's neck and tied tightly. It didn't look like the rope would break easily, giving Hiccup some confidence. The end of the third rope connected itself to the long rope, effectively connecting the small, near black but blue dragon, to the large, spiny, green dragon. Hiccup nodded.

"Thank you, Kingsley," he said.

Kingsley shrugged. "If this will make the dragon not destroy our campsite, I'm all for it."

Hiccup chuckled inwardly. He had no promises — Razor Neck would probably be just as bad around the keepers.

Just as they were about to let Razor Neck out of his cage, Astrid walked over to them. Hiccup noticed her scowl and sighed. She would probably want to go now, or berate him for stupid behaviour. One of the two.

"Hiccup, are you serious?" she yelled.

Hiccup looked down. "Yes. It might be the only way for him to calm down."

She looked furious. "Alone? You could get seriously hurt!"

"I have Toothless," he said in a 'duh' tone.

Astrid frowned, which turned into deeper scowl as her anger grew. "I know, but if he's too busy getting the other dragon, you're going to be on your own."

Toothless growled at her, not liking her tone. She didn't even spare him a glance. Hiccup turned to look at Toothless, then stepped back. "He'd never let anything happen to me, Astrid. You know that," his voice was softer, trying to get her to calm down.

Astrid shook her head. "You're not going on your own," she said firmly. Hiccup sighed. There would be no fighting with her when she was like this.

"Maybe you could ring your own dragon?" he suggested. May as well give some of the other caged dragons some flight.

Astrid shook her head. "Grass Glow is already asleep for the night. I wouldn't want to wake her."

Hiccup nodded. "Alright, come on then. We're leaving now," he said.

Astrid nodded and whistled. Immediately, the Nadder appeared and Astrid mounted her. She grinned and looked to Hiccup, as though to say, 'come on, then, we're waiting for you'. Hiccup grinned and hopped into his own saddle, checking the rope was tied. He nodded to Kingsley, who then preceded to open the cage with a spell.

Immediately Razor Neck charged out the open door and roared loudly, the sound echoing in the forest. He sprinted forwards a few steps, before he noticed the rope around his neck and turned, his piercing gaze shooting straight at Hiccup.

Toothless growled at him, then turned it into a roar. Razor Neck looked down and walked back over to Hiccup, his head down. Toothless nodded to himself, before he spread his wings. Astrid and Stormfly were already in the air, not wanting to be in the clearing when the dragon was released. Razor Neck seemed to get the idea and opened his wings, spreading them apart. In one beat, he was in the air and off the ground. Hiccup watched for a moment before launching Toothless into the sky and shooting above the trees.

The rope was long enough that Toothless' speed didn't have an effect. It allowed the pair to fly at a solid pace, with Toothless stopping every so often when the Horntail got too far back. He wasn't a slow dragon, not by a long shot, but that didn't mean he could keep up with the Night Fury.

Astrid kept up with Hiccup since they weren't flying incredibly fast. She kept a wary eye on the Horntail, making sure he wouldn't do anything rash. Hiccup could tell, by the calm and peaceful look on Razor Neck's face, he was having a pretty pleasant time. He didn't seem to be having any issues, and it didn't look as though he wanted to kill any of them, so that was a start.

The group did a lap of the school and Razor Neck made angry sounds at the people below. Hiccup rolled his eyes and egged him on, urging him to forget the school. Razor Neck didn't seem incredibly happy, but he eventually focused on his flying.

They paused over the Black Lake and Hiccup turned to Astrid. She looked at Razor Neck before looking back at Hiccup. The Horntail waited patiently for Hiccup to make up his mind, taking in the sites from the sky and watching the lake with interest. If Hiccup didn't know any better, he wouldn't have thought the dragon was a pain to train at all. Now he looked like one of the normal dragons they had on Berk, minus the rope attaching the dragon to his own, of course.

"Race?" Hiccup asked, leaning down to look at Toothless. He snorted in agreement, happily watching the lake.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Hope you can keep up with me," she said.

Hiccup grinned. "Oh, I'm sure we can manage," he taunted.

Razor Neck flew closer to the two other dragons, watching Toothless warily, as though waiting for him to tell him off. Toothless gave him a glance, one Hiccup couldn't quite decipher, but they seemed to form some sort of understanding. Hiccup turned to the dragon and grinned.

"You up for some healthy competition?" he asked. He knew Razor Neck didn't know what he meant, but it didn't matter. None of this mattered. They would win the race, Razor Neck was being civilised, and Astrid was with them. What was the worst that could happen?

Razor Neck snorted and breathed smoke from his nose. Hiccup grinned and faced Astrid. "I think we're ready," he said. As if to confirm, Razor Neck crouched in the air, preparing for instant speed. Hopefully he wasn't too slow, Hiccup thought. He would like to win.

Astrid got in line with the other two dragons and they counted to three together. On three, Toothless, Razor Neck and Stormfly leapt from their standstill and straight into speed. Hiccup leaned forward on his dragon, egging him forwards. They didn't use their full speed, noting that Razor Neck was barely keeping up as it was. They were in front of Astrid, and that was all that really mattered.

Razor Neck breathed heavily, his wings beating furiously, his neck moving up and down to keep his balance, his tail swishing. He was racing his heart out, and apparently enjoying it. He looked as though this was the most fun he'd had in ages. Hiccup grinned and turned back to the front. This was really a speed match between Razor Neck and Stormfly, and they were about level. Astrid didn't look too impressed about it, but she kept her concentration straight ahead, egging her dragon forward.

They rounded a bend in the lake and Razor Neck lost some of his previous speed, trying to catch up. He opened his mouth furiously, his spilt tongue hanging out of the side in concentration, as he lifted his wings and pushed them harder than he had been before. He sped up and nearly shot past Toothless, had he not been paying attention and also picked up the right speed.

Stormfly was just in front now, not even a length. Hiccup grinned and turned back, seeing the sheer determination on the Horntail's face. Toothless curved himself as they rounded another bend. This one didn't cause any effects to their speed, Razor Neck prepared for it. Toothless pushed himself, Razor Neck pushed himself, and Hiccup egged them on. He grinned as Toothless overtook Astrid, with Razor Neck not far behind.

They neared the end of the lake, Hiccup still in front. Now Razor Neck was also in front, not by much, but enough to win. Astrid scowled and crossed the line second. Hiccup sat up straight and held his hands in the air proudly, shouting his winnings. It hadn't really been that hard for him, but still exhilarating. He slowed down and

allowed both Toothless and Razor Neck to catch their breath.

Razor Neck seemed in pretty poor condition, his days in the cage having taken an obvious toll on him. Hiccup smiled, his own dragon barely feeling the race. For him, that was more like a warmup. Hiccup would have to come back out later to just let him finish what they'd already started. Perhaps the rest of the team would like the race...

Astrid turned around to Hiccup and grinned. "Nice work there. I see you got a fast one." Stormfly was the second fastest dragon on the team, Toothless being first and Meatlug last, so it was funny to find one which was faster than Stormfly.

"Yeah, he's quite fast," Hiccup agreed.

Razor Neck held his head proudly as his breathing slowed to a regular pace. Flying didn't strain him as much as earlier, and Hiccup smiled, watching the dragon take in his surroundings.

"You want a break, mate?" he asked.

Razor Neck looked at him, cocking his head to the side. Toothless gestured towards the ground. Razor Neck looked slightly panicked for a moment, before realising what he'd meant. They would still be able to fly afterwards. He dropped in the sky, Toothless following suit, then Astrid. They landed on the ground with a thud, the Horntail more than the Night Fury, then Hiccup hopped off his dragon.

Astrid walked over to Hiccup, Stormfly at Toothless and Razor Neck, taking a drink from the lake. "Not bad. I was fully prepared to fight for you," she grinned.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "He's not that bad. I like Razor Neck, danger and all," Hiccup said firmly. Having worked with him, he'd grown to like him, the danger was just one of his traits. He wouldn't have liked being Toothless' best friend if danger wasn't part of their daily life, so the Horntail wasn't such an issue.

Astrid laughed. "Of course. I like my dragon, too." She was referring to Grass Glow, Hiccup could tell.

"Because she didn't try to kill you the first time you met her."

Astrid grinned. "True." She shrugged. "But neither did yours." She pointed out.

Hiccup nodded, remembering the first time he'd met the Horntail. It had been quite the day, when the dragon seemed angry but had accepted Hiccup, just like that. Now he wasn't such a forthcoming dragon. Oh well, it was nice to have a dragon almost more difficult to train than Toothless. It didn't help that he was in a cage all the time, but the challenge was definitely worth the effort.

"You guys ready to head back soon?" Hiccup asked, attracting the attention of the three dragons.

Razor Neck put his head down, not wanting to go back. Hiccup sighed and walked towards him, ignoring his best friend's warning growl. He

stopped near Razor Neck and waited to see if he would attack him. Razor Neck looked too glum to really think about attacking the small Viking.

"Tomorrow, I promise we'll take a longer, more scenic flight. Then we can have another race with the others," Hiccup said, trying to reassure the dragon. Now that he knew how Razor Neck behaved with this sort of thing, he wasn't about to stop doing it. He would get Razor Neck in a fit form, a healthy mindset and maybe he wouldn't try to kill him so often. He didn't know why he hadn't thought of this before.

Astrid walked over to Stormfly and looked at Hiccup. "I'm coming with you," she said.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Astrid, he won't hurt me."

Razor Neck nodded, as though to prove he wouldn't. He bent his head and met Hiccup's eye level, breathing deeply through his nose. Hiccup smiled and rested his palm on his tough nose. Razor Neck seemed like one of the calmest dragons in that moment, almost more than Toothless. Hiccup smiled at him, realising there wasn't much difference between the two. In reality, both were protective. Razor Neck just happened to have more anger than Toothless. Of course, Hiccup would never love Razor Neck more than he loved Toothless, it was impossible.

"I think we're going to have a better stay here now, aren't we?" Hiccup asked. Razor Neck made small clucking sounds, agreeing, and stepped back. Hiccup smiled and moved to Toothless, patiently waiting for his rider to come back.

Astrid was already on her dragon, waiting for Hiccup to mount his own. Toothless waited for Razor Neck before the two launched themselves into the air, followed by the Nadder. The three dragons did a slow lap of the school again, this time Razor Neck was able to focus on things other than the students around the school, whom he thought were after him. He saw a bird and tried to chase it, only being called off the chase by a grumbling Night Fury. Hiccup laughed at his pouty face, before Razor Neck was distracted by another few sights.

They flew back over the Forbidden Forest, where they landed in the clearing. Razor Neck stayed placid as Hiccup walked him towards his cage, letting him close the heavy gate by himself. Hiccup struggled with the heavy metal door and was relieved when Toothless helped him. He looked at the two dragons and nodded.

Kingsley walked over to the three and looked at the Horntail, locking the cage. Razor Neck focused on Hiccup, as though thanking him. The keeper wore a surprised look as he inspected Hiccup, as though he was expecting wounds.

"What? Surprised he didn't hurt me?" Hiccup asked, his tone light, even though the number of suspicions that surrounded these wizards annoyed him.

Kingsley nodded slowly. "Well, yeah. I expected at least one bruise," he admitted.

Hiccup laughed. "Toothless would have taken the worst of it, stupid dragon," he added the last part affectionately. Toothless grumbled and demanded his attention. Hiccup laughed and scratched the dragon behind his ears, effectively satisfying him.

"Still. Oh well, I'm glad you had fun," he said, though he didn't sound all that glad. Maybe next time he'd have to paint himself to look as though he'd been hurt. Yeah, Toothless would love that, he thought sarcastically.

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. I'll come back later to give him his dinner, but he's probably hungry from the flight," he said.

Kingsley nodded as Hiccup walked over to collect some fish. Toothless looked eagerly at Hiccup, knowing he'd receive some of the fish. He laughed and shot a piece right into the jaws of the Night Fury, only giving him one before giving some to the Horntail.

Razor Neck hungrily ate the fish, knowing he'd get more later but still eating it as though it was his last meal. Hiccup laughed as he fed the hungry dragon, giving Toothless three and the Horntail more than ten. Toothless stuck his head in the basket, making sad sounds when he realised there weren't any more fish inside. Hiccup laughed at his sullen expression, finding the dragon's mood incredibly funny. Toothless glared at him and walked to the side, staring back up at Razor Neck.

For the first time since Toothless had met the Horntail, there wasn't any anger behind their glares. This time, it was as though they had an agreement, as though they were trying to be nice to each other. Hiccup could tell it was harder for Toothless than it was for Razor Neck. It must have been something about how protective the stupid dragon was.

Hiccup said a farewell to Razor Neck as he hopped back onto his dragon and shot into the sky, heading back into the room. He had learnt something today, and he needed to write it down.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry watched the bug in shock as it crumpled in pain. The Cruciatus Curse, Neville had said with horror. He couldn't believe Professor Moody would actually show the students the curses. He'd already been through the Imperius Curse, the first of the three Unforgivable Curses. Harry was sure the Professor wouldn't show the class the last one.</p>

"What's the last of the curses? Granger?" Professor Moody asked, directing his attention to Hermione. He instructed the bug over to Hermione after he'd finished with Neville. The boy sat down, his face aghast with shock, eyes bloodshot. Hermione glared up at Professor Moody, complete disagreeing with his teaching methods.

She bit her tongue, not saying anything. Professor Moody grunted. "Avada Kedavra." This shocked many of the students into silence. Hermione looked away from the now dead bug which sat on one of her books, refusing to acknowledge what had just happened.

The bell rang, signalling the end of the lesson. Harry cheered inwardly, not wanting another second near the dead bug. Of course, he

was also thankful his last class for the day was over. He waited patiently for Hermione and Ron to be ready, and they descended the numerous stairs of the tower room.

"Did you see Neville's face? It was just cruel," Hermione whispered as they walked.

Harry offered a small nod in agreement. He couldn't believe what they'd just witnessed. "It's not right." He wasn't just talking about Neville's face, he was also talking about how Professor Moody had just tortured a bug and then killed it in front of students that had horrible personal experiences with them. It went against many of the school morals â€“ they were Unforgivable Curses for a \_reason\_.

They walked down the corridor after having descended all the stairs, then headed up to their room. They had a lot of free time now, with some homework that had to be done. Harry sighed as he sank into the chair by the fire place. The fire was warm and comforting after what they'd just witnessed.

Hermione sat in the chair next to him, Ron on the other side. They looked sad, with empty expressions. Harry knew he didn't look any different. Apparently, witnessing a professor perform the Unforgivable Curses in front of you didn't do much for your mood.

"So, what are we doing tonight?" Harry asked, needing to get the lesson off his mind.

Hermione looked at him. "Trying to figure out the egg?" she suggested.

Ron rolled his eyes. "There's nothing to figure out there, Hermione. It's a dud egg."

She glared at him. "It's not a \_dud\_, it's just a mystery."

Harry joined in, "Whatever it is, we need to figure it out soon. The second task is next week." Nervous waves ran down his spine at the thought. He wasn't ready for it. He didn't want to \_have\_ to be ready for it. He didn't want to be in the Tournament. He didn't care about eternal glory and all that. He would be killed before he got the chance to win. Even advanced wizards struggled with this Tournament.

Hermione nodded. "You're right. Let's get to work."

Harry chuckled lightly. Knowing Hermione, she would be in the library until dinner, trying to get some sort of idea. Harry stood up and went over to the egg, eyeing it carefully as though he was checking for clues. Nothing jumped out at him, but he knew he would eventually figure it out. Eventually he would prepare for the next task, and eventually he would move up from last place. Maybe then he wouldn't have to worry so much about dying. Yeah, Harry thought. Sounded about right.

## 10. Chapter 10

Harry stared angrily at the egg. He was beginning to get fed up with

the stupid sounds it insisted on making, and the shiny, tempting button that made it so easy to open. His friends were annoyed as well. The number of times they'd tried to open it without it making horrible sounds was crazy. It was safe to say they weren't allowed to open the egg in the dormitory, the library, the common room, the Great Hall, the courtyard or the hallways anymore. The only safe place was near Hagrid's hut, where they were sitting at that moment.

Hermione rolled over onto her stomach, the book in her hands. Unfortunately, it was a history book, and not one that told them how to open the egg without severely damaging the eardrums of anyone in the vicinity. She was looking up the past tasks, to see if they would have any insights on the next one. Harry sighed and looked at the egg. He tossed it to the side, watching the gold shine as it rolled down the hill slowly. Ron stood up and caught it, frowning at Harry for being so childish.

"Ugh! This is so irritating!" Harry said, his frustration finally getting the better of him.

Ron and Hermione sat up, looking at him with sympathy. With the second task only four days away, things were getting pretty tight. They needed to find out what was inside the egg, and soon. Harry's life almost depended on it.

Hermione patted Harry lightly on the back. "We're going to find out, Harry. Don't worry," she said. Though her voice sounded comforting, it only made Harry feel worse. He clutched his head with his hands, angrily pulling at strands of his brown hair.

Ron rolled his eyes and pulled Harry's hands from his face. "Come on, Harry. Since when do you give up?"

Harry smiled, his lips barely turning up. Ron and Hermione grinned, knowing it was working.

"Anyway, we still have to do Snape's homework," Ron said, a slight scowl on his face. He really didn't like Professor Snape, for no real reason either. Well, Professor Snape did pick on the Gryffindor, favour the Slytherin and hate Harry with a passion, but other than that, they were sure he wasn't that bad of a guy.  
Sarcasm.

Hermione groaned. "You haven't done it?" Of course she had, Harry thought bitterly. The girl would be top of the class if they didn't have Snape as a teacher. She always did her work the minute she got it, maybe sooner if she had the time turner.

Harry watched Ron get progressively irritated at Hermione's nagging. "Hermione, since you've finished, perhaps you could help me."

Hermione nodded. "Because I don't do that anyway?" She was annoyed, as usual. She always helped the two boys with their homework, Potions class especially. She never seemed to really mind, though, which was why they continued getting her help for things.

"Yes," Ron said.

Hermione smiled and lay back onto the ground. They didn't have their books with them, so they would have to wait for a little while, before they went back to the common room to help with the work. That wasn't such a bad thing, really. It gave them time to rest before diving into the wonderful world of healing potions.

They lay in silence for a short time, before they were interrupted by someone standing above them. Harry looked up, recognising the person as Cedric Diggory, another of the four champions and of Hufflepuff house. They had also gone to the Quidditch World Cup with him and his father, before they had been rudely interrupted by the Death Eaters. What a night.

Harry stood up and faced the taller student. Cedric smiled. He was one of the few students that didn't hate Harry for being a part of the Tournament. Harry had also told him what the first task would be about, with the dragons and all.

"Hey, Cedric," Harry greeted. He hoped the seventh year wasn't there to see if he'd cracked the egg (literally) because he would be sorely disappointed.

Cedric nodded to Ron and Hermione, then nodded to Harry. "Hey. How you going?" he asked casually.

Harry shrugged. "Could be doing better," he replied.

Cedric smiled. "You know, the Prefect bathroom on fifth floor is a nice place to take a bath. You should take you egg up there to have a look," he said, leaning in to whisper it to him. Harry gave him a curious look, wondering what he was talking about.

Harry moved back slightly, looking into his green eyes. Cedric shrugged and smiled. "I'll see you around, Harry. Have a good one." Wow, that was one \_strange\_ guy, Harry thought.

He waved farewell before Cedric turned around and left, going back to the Hufflepuff dorms. Harry turned to his friends. Hermione looked calculating while Ron just looked stunned.

"You just got invited into the Prefect bathroom!" he said. Of course, \_that\_ was the thing Ron chose to focus on, Harry thought, his manner sarcastic. He didn't really mind Ron's attitude, the redhead just had a strange way of viewing the world, was all.

Harry rolled his eyes and sat back down. "Yeah. Guess I did," he agreed. He lifted the large egg into his lap and stared at it. Would Cedric have been giving him advice? Maybe, because Harry'd told him about the first task, he was giving him a hint to what the second was? Harry could only hope. Maybe the egg just needed to be around water or something...that wouldn't be strange or anything.

"Are you going to listen to his suggestion?" Hermione asked curiously, although there was disbelief and caution laced between her words. She clearly thought Cedric wouldn't want to help the fellow champion.

Harry sighed. "Hermione, what choice do I have? Honestly, this is the best bet. I'll try this, if it doesn't work, we'll go back to \_reading\_." He shuddered at the words, disliking the way it felt on

his tongue. She grimaced at him, disliking the way he said it too. She was too much of a book worm.

Hermione nodded. "Alright, Harry, we'll try it your way," she said resentfully. She obviously had no hope that Cedric's suggestion would help anything and Harry didn't have much either, but he was willing to try anything at this point.

Ron scoffed. "Hermione, you can't go into the bathroom, it's a \_men's\_ room," he said.

She rolled her eyes. "I wouldn't want to see Harry like that, anyway. Gross." She shivered, causing Harry to laugh.

"Good to know," he said lightly.

"Sorry, Harry, but you know what I mean," she quickly amended.

Harry laughed, as did Ron. "It's alright, Hermione," Harry said, accepting her apology.

She smiled happily. "Well, if that's all, we should probably start with this assignment," she said, pointedly looking at Ron. He sighed exasperatedly, not wanting to look at his Potions work. He wanted to have a day where they didn't think about the stupid subject. Of course, life didn't exactly work that way.

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><p>Kingsley stared at Razor Neck in surprise. Over the three days after Hiccup had taken the dragon for his first flight, the once dangerous and fierce dragon had changed almost completely. He would let people near him without immediately charging, allow Hiccup to touch him without getting angry, and he was also much calmer. The other keepers were extremely happy about this turn of events, and they wanted to learn everything from Hiccup.</p>

"How did you do this?" Kingsley muttered.

Hiccup shrugged as he stretched a hand between the cage bars. Razor Neck clicked his tongue and looked at Hiccup, his eyes shining with excitement. The small cage seemed to bother the large dragon less now days, with other things to focus on. He was clearly happier than he'd been in a while because of the short flights the three would go on. Astrid had joined them as well, but Razor Neck hadn't changed his opinion of her too much.

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "Magic."

Kingsley shook his head, a small smile on his face. "Are you taking him for another flight soon?" he asked curiously.

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. You don't mind, do you?" he asked. He didn't really care if they allowed him to or not, because he would be going anyway. Razor Neck was benefiting far too much to stop, and Toothless didn't seem to mind, either. They had thrashed Astrid in a race the previous day â€“ it was hilarious to watch her lose.

Kingsley stepped away and looked at Hiccup. "I'll go and get the ropes," he said, turning completely to find where they had left the

ropes. Hiccup knew where they were hiding them, but humoured the wizards in thinking he didn't. They didn't want him to know because they thought he would fly off with Razor Neck, which wouldn't happen unless they had all the other dragons with them as well.

Hiccup looked at Toothless, laying in the shade near Razor Neck's cage. He'd become more lenient with having Hiccup around the cage. He was still on edge, but he didn't feel the need to be in front of the boy all the time. Hiccup was very happy to know his dragon wasn't always going to be so protective over him.

Kingsley came back with the three ropes and Toothless stood up. Hiccup thanked him and watched as the rope latched onto Toothless's saddle, then joined to the large one. Razor Neck was up, already anticipating the third rope joining around his neck.

The gate of Razor Neck's cage was opened once Hiccup was sitting on his own dragon, allowing Razor Neck to take a couple of steps into the open space. He waited patiently for Hiccup to be ready, not moving an inch where he knew he wasn't supposed to. He wasn't impatient â€“ he knew he'd be able to go for a fly in the very near future. Hiccup smiled and turned in the saddle, looking at his Viking friends. They were all sitting astride their dragons, waiting for Hiccup's command. They would be joining today's flight.

"Let's go then, gang," he said happily, leaning forward and clicking Toothless into the sky. Razor Neck shot upwards after Hiccup, not wanting to be left behind. Once they were above the trees, they waited for the other dragons to show their faces before doing their warm up laps of the forest and school. They did this every flight before a race and some fast paced work.

Astrid flew up beside Hiccup, watching Razor Neck carefully. The dragon looked so innocent in the air, watching everything with large and curious eyes. It was nothing like the dragon they'd first encountered, the one Hiccup and Toothless had both disliked with such passion. This one was a pleasure to have around, almost more so than the other dragons in the cages.

Hiccup grinned and Toothless flew forward, Razor Neck in line with their flight. The others flew several beats behind, ready to leap forward if something went wrong. Hiccup looked around as they circled the forest, seeing the animals he'd never heard of before moving below. Of course, being in the Forbidden Forest so constantly, he knew the majority of the animals, he'd just never personally met one.

Snotlout flew up to the other side of Hiccup, Hookfang shooting his hot breath as he flew. The dragon watched Razor Neck warily, having never properly met him before. "When are getting to the real stuff?" he asked, his voice as annoying as ever.

Hiccup sighed and looked to Razor Neck. "Snotlout, we've been over this. We have a warm up, have a race, then some fast work. That's the routine I would like us to get into."

Snotlout started babbling to himself about the injustice of this whole situation and flew back to where the twins and Fishlegs were seated. Astrid flew alongside Hiccup, not wanting Snotlout to come back and change the plans of the flight.

The teens finished two warm up laps and went towards the Black Lake, hovering over it. Meatlug started in front, having the unfair disadvantage of being on the slowest dragon there. Hiccup started close to the back, knowing him and Razor Neck could win easily. The only issue was Snotlout — he didn't play fair. The twins were laughing about something or other — probably relating to some sort of explosion — so Hiccup had a feeling they weren't really a part of the competition.

"Ready, set, GO!" Astrid shouted.

Everyone launched from their flight still and into their fastest speed. Toothless shot off towards the lead, easily navigating through the other dragons. Razor Neck growled loudly, manoeuvring his way above the others to avoid collision. Hiccup grinned as they flew nearly directly underneath the larger dragon, the others a long way back. They kept moving forward, rounding a bend.

Just like with their first race, and every race after, Razor Neck lost a small pocket of speed at the bend. He wasn't the best with tight turns. Astrid was able to shoot past, taking the lead. Hiccup squinted and leaned forward, egging his best friend on. Razor Neck didn't need the encouragement, he glared at the Nadder and leapt forwards through the air, pushing hard and gaining more speed. Toothless kept effortlessly up with the Hungarian Horntail, loving the exhilarating feel of nearly beating Astrid once again.

They rounded another corner and Razor Neck held his speed. Stormfly slowed, giving a wide berth for Hiccup to fly straight through. Just as he was about to cross the finish line, a breath of fire shot past them, catching on Toothless' tail. Hiccup yelled as the fire spread on the tail fin, burning it quickly. They could just finish the race, Hiccup thought, seeing the land in sight.

With the race being over water, it wouldn't be a very smart idea to crash there. Razor Neck watched cautiously as the Night Fury lost speed, wondering as to why it was. Hiccup looked up, then looked to where the land was. They were almost there, just a few more wing beats...

Hiccup knew the tail was out when they started to make a dive towards the land. Razor Neck was one step ahead of them and used his strength to pick the small dragon and carry much of his weight towards the land, which wasn't that far. As soon as they were over it, Toothless crashed heavily onto the ground, Razor Neck landing gently beside them.

Astrid landed near the fallen dragon and quickly jumped off, running towards Hiccup. She lifted him up, gently trying to pry him from his seat. His metal leg was clipped into the strips, proving hard to pull out of the saddle. She looked at Hiccup, who looked pretty beat up, even though he hadn't really touched the ground.

Hiccup groaned and opened his eyes, not having realised he'd closed them. Toothless lay in a heap on the ground, his red tail fin burnt off. He groaned again. That would take a while to fix and they still needed to fly Razor Neck. Toothless looked at Hiccup as he sat on the ground, the both of them straightening themselves up. Hiccup groaned as he looked at the numerous bumps and scratches on his arms and felt

them on his face. Toothless didn't look too bad, his scales looking dusty but otherwise unharmed. He looked over to Astrid, sitting right beside him.

"Are you alright?" she asked.

He nodded. "I've had worse," he said.

Razor Neck walked over to Hiccup, leaning down to see if he was alright. He probably guessed there wouldn't be much of a fight now, but he didn't seem angry. However, he didn't look at Toothless, pointedly ignoring the small dragon.

Hiccup stood up, dusting his clothes off. "What happened anyway?"

Astrid stood as well, turning to glare at Snotlout. He stood on the ground, leaning against Hookfang's neck, innocent as ever. Well, that was what he was trying to look like. It wasn't working. "Snotlout didn't like you winning so Hookfang shot at your tail," she said angrily.

Hiccup shook his head, looking disappointedly at Snotlout. "You can do that kind of thing back on Berk, Snotlout, but here? With Razor Neck? We were trying for a nice routine, not a rescue!" He was getting worked up with his cousin, the one who always managed to push his buttons.

Snotlout stood up straight. "Oh, so now it's my fault?" he asked.

Astrid glared at him. "Of course it is! Your dragon shot fire directly at his tail!"

"And whose fault is it that he doesn't have a tail?" Snotlout sneered.

"Seriously? You're going there?" Hiccup asked incredulously. Toothless turned around to hiss at him, Razor Neck growling. Hiccup smirked inwardly; having the protection of two dragons was pretty neat.

Snotlout frowned. "I wouldn't have to if you weren't making such a big deal about this."

Astrid scowled. "We wouldn't have to if you refrained from nearly killing him!" she shouted.

Hiccup sighed and looked to Toothless. However annoyed he was at Snotlout, they were both fine and unharmed, which meant there was no real point to this argument. "Guys, please. We just need to figure out how we're going to get Toothless home now."

Astrid turned soft and looked at Hiccup. "We could always bring a boat around?" she suggested.

Snotlout scoffed. "A little walk isn't going to hurt him, Hiccup. Toughen up."

Astrid scowled. She was about to open her mouth when Hiccup put his hand up to stop them. "As much fun as it is to listen to you guys argue, night fall is coming soon, and I don't know about you guys, but I don't really want to miss dinner."

The twins groaned. "Snotlout!" Ruffnut moaned, stamping her foot angrily.

"Yeah, how could you do this to us?" Tuffnut agreed, his voice covered in disbelieving anger.

Hiccup rolled his eyes at the twins before looking up to Razor Neck curiously.

Astrid shook her head. "Uh, no. Hiccup, too dangerous. No way," she said firmly.

Hiccup looked at her. "What? What's the harm in trying? Astrid, come on. He's strong enough, large enough, and I'm sure he wouldn't mind," he said.

Astrid shook her head again. "I'm not letting you do it. It's too dangerous." She put more force behind her words this time.

Toothless looked at the exchange, still not understanding what they were arguing about. If something was risky for his Viking, he wanted to know, but he couldn't see anything around them that could present much of an issue, unless you counted Razor Neck, but that was different now.

Hiccup sighed. "Astrid, it's the only way to get back to the forest quickly."

Astrid shook her head once again. "We'll find another way, please, just don't." This time she was pleading.

Hiccup looked to Razor Neck. "Astrid, nothing will happen, I'll have you right beside me," he said.

Astrid looked at him, as though he'd grown another head. "You can't seriously want to do this. Please, it's too dangerous."

"Astrid, Razor Neck is the only way to get back. Maybe if I fly him, we'll get back in time," Hiccup said exasperatedly.

"Hiccup, you want to have Toothless ride on the very dragon he loathes, do you really think this wise?" she asked.

The twins looked up immediately. "You want your dragon to ride that one?" Tuffnut asked.

Ruffnut grinned. "I call dibs on the Night Fury when Hiccup falls and dies."

Hiccup shook his head, looking at everyone. "Look, it's the only way, and I'm not dying," he said pointedly towards the twins. They looked down, but rock, paper, scissored it anyway. He rolled his eyes and looked back to Astrid.

She waved her hands angrily in the air. "Fine. Fine. But I'm not

cleaning up the remains," she said angrily.

Hiccup grinned and walked over to Toothless. He was looking uneasily at Hiccup, wondering exactly what the plan was. He wasn't too sure it was a smart idea, but he did trust his Viking. He had to.

"It's alright, bud, I would never let anything happen to you," Hiccup whispered, making Toothless whine. He smiled and gently scratched his head.

Hiccup walked over to Razor Neck slowly. The large dragon dropped his head to Hiccup, wondering what the holdup was. The boy reached his hand up to the dragon, meeting half way at his head. Toothless watched warily as Razor Neck rested his head under Hiccup's gentle hand. Hiccup smiled and moved his hand along the body of the large dragon, resting under his wing. Razor Neck watched curiously as he gently put pressure on the spot where he would sit. The dragon did nothing, except look curiously and watch what he was doing.

Eventually, after seemingly forever, Hiccup stepped back and allowed the dragon to have a break. Razor Neck stood patiently as Hiccup moved back towards Toothless. Astrid walked over to Hiccup, her frown present on her face. She still didn't agree with this idea, but what choice did they have? It was the only way for Hiccup to get back with Toothless safely. They couldn't very well run the way; there were too many trees and other things which blocked their way, not to mention they didn't know which way to go.

"Alright, Hiccup. We'd best get going then," Astrid said at last.

Hiccup nodded and walked back to Razor Neck. He ran his hand gently along his scales and looked into the dragons eyes briefly, before jumping carefully onto his back. Razor Neck barely made a move, already used to having a rider. Hiccup smiled and gently patted his neck, allowing him to get comfortable. He didn't seem to mind, not having anything to complain about. Hiccup wasn't being harsh, and he was letting him adjust.

Toothless whined. Hiccup looked down and realised how high up he already was and nearly paled. He was so thankful at that moment for how short Toothless really was. Hiccup watched as Toothless walked carefully towards Razor Neck, making sure not to make any sudden movements. He didn't want Hiccup getting injured.

Hiccup gently tapped Razor Neck, giving him a look. The dragon seemed to understand and walked towards Toothless. The movement startled Hiccup, not realising how smooth a ride Toothless really was. He rolled his eyes to himself, holding onto one of the many horns the Horntail had. Toothless stood still, wings closed into his body, as Razor Neck picked him up with his sharp claws, resting the small near black but blue dragon carefully in his talons. Hiccup smiled. Neither would like this very much, but it was the only way.

Razor Neck launched into the air, causing Hiccup to lean back slightly. Toothless watched Hiccup the entire way, making sure he stayed put on the back of the dragon. Astrid flew dutifully next to Hiccup, with Fishlegs flying close to Toothless. Razor Neck made happy sounds from his mouth as they finished their cool down lap of

the school and headed back to the Forbidden Forest. Hiccup kept talking to both Toothless and Razor Neck, making sure they understood nothing bad would happen.

Astrid looked pale as a ghost as they made their way back. Hiccup knew she would only feel better once he was off the dragon and on the ground with Toothless, but Hiccup didn't feel insecure at all, no matter how tall the dragon was or how dangerous he had been. Now he was a dragon with needs, just like all the others. He was special too, and Hiccup would never forget him.

As they landed in the clearing, Razor Neck dropped Toothless before landing. Toothless scurried away from the large claws, glad to be free. The Horntail landed heavily on the ground, a jolt moving through Hiccup. He smiled and stayed still for a second, allowing the dragon to get used to the feeling, before sliding carefully down his scales and onto the ground.

Razor Neck stood patiently as Hiccup released the rope and led him back to his cage. He went inside, knowing dinner would be next. Hiccup blatantly ignored the rest of the teens, not wanting to talk to them. They would all just say how incredibly stupid the whole ordeal had been, but Hiccup couldn't really care less.

Toothless sat next to Hiccup once they'd fed the large dragon and then demanded some attention. Hiccup laughed and hugged him, surprising the small dragon. "I'll fix your tail. I promise you won't have to go through that again," he swore.

Astrid walked over to Hiccup, a disapproving look on her face. "I can't believe you just did that."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Astrid, I'm alive, aren't I?" he asked, a smile playing on his lips.

Astrid scowled. "That's beside the point."

She didn't get to say anything else as two keepers walked over to them — Kingsley and Charlie. Hiccup looked at the shocked faces and knew they were in for it. All they needed now was for Dumbledore to find out he had been flying on the dragon and they were good to go.

Charlie scowled at Hiccup. "What was that?" he asked, his voice a mix of anger and shock. It was most likely he was surprised the tiny Viking had ridden such a large dragon, and let his own be carried in the claws of the same one.

Hiccup shrugged as Astrid stepped forward, fully prepared to answer. "That was Hiccup averting a crisis," she said.

Charlie shook his head and then his fist angrily towards Razor Neck. "You're supposed to train it, not ride it like your pet!"

Hiccup looked towards Razor Neck, then to Toothless. He didn't seem to like being called a pet, much less being compared to Razor Neck. "I was simply getting home. Toothless's tail fin was burnt," he sent a shooting glare at Snotlout, "so we had no way of getting back."

Charlie scowled. It seemed like all this guy ever did was scowl. "You should have asked for assistance, and we would have helped you get back."

Hiccup laughed. "That's rich! You would have just left Toothless there and hurt Razor Neck. I don't care what you say. Neither of them were harmed, Toothless didn't have to work, and Razor Neck is now calmer than before. As I see it, you should be thanking me."

"Thanking you? Thanking you? What have you done here to help?" Charlie demanded, stepping dangerously closer to Hiccup. Toothless snarled and walked forwards, baring his teeth and hissing. However, this did not deter the wizard.

"Other than taking care of this dragon and helping you with the dragon tournament? Everything," Hiccup retorted. Ok, so he might have been a bit dramatic, but his meaning was clear. They had done so much to help around the place and they weren't receiving anything for their work.

Charlie took another step forwards, now directly in front of Hiccup. He was much taller than him, glaring down into Hiccup's green eyes with distaste evident in them. "Please. We could have done it on our own."

A loud and ferocious yell stopped him in his tracks, making him flinch. Hiccup turned in surprise to see a fully battle ready Razor Neck standing in his cage. Hiccup looked to Toothless, who was looking much the same way. Razor Neck flared his wings and pressed his bared teeth against the bars.

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah, you seemed to be doing just fine when I first came here."

Charlie glared more forcefully at Hiccup, a smirk present on his face. "If I recall, you had some issues as well."

"Because he didn't trust me because of the way you treated him," Hiccup shouted, losing his temper. How dare he put the blame on him? Hiccup was only there to save the lives of the dragons, not to mess his own up more.

Astrid stepped forwards, Stormfly following suit. Hiccup knew the Nadder wasn't going to help, Astrid could handle things on her own. "You're just selfish. You take all the credit for our work without thinking about how we feel."

Charlie smirked again, regaining his cool gaze. "It is us who look after the dragons when you are not here, which is more often than not."

Hiccup looked to Astrid as she snorted. "Yeah, because you do such a great job, too."

Charlie scowled and Kingsley stepped forwards. "Look, everyone just calm down," he said, raising his hands to stop the verbal war.

Snotlout stepped forwards. "Easy for you to say, you're just as bad

as him." He gestured his thumb towards Charlie who snorted indignantly.

Hiccup sighed. "Guys, enough. It doesn't matter. We have a few months left and then we're out of here. We can put up with them for a little longer," he said exasperatedly.

Astrid looked at him, confused. "Few more months?" she asked, surprised and angry at the same time.

Charlie was the one who answered, in a way of not really answering at all. "So Dumbledore told you what we wanted from you?" he asked.

Hiccup scowled and stepped back towards Toothless and Razor Neck. "Yes, he told me. I will not show you everything I worked hard to learn, but I guess some can be shown," he said, looking at Toothless and turning his back on the wizards.

Astrid walked over to Hiccup, confused. "What?" she asked.

Hiccup looked down and looked at her. "He asked me to teach the wizards everything we know about the dragons."

She glared at the ground. "And you agreed?"

"Astrid, what choice did I have? Seriously, tell me?" he asked.

She sighed. "You're right. But we can always give them false techniques and information," she suggested, an idea forming in her head. Hiccup smiled.

Hiccup turned back to the keepers. "Right. Now that this is resolved, we'll be going to dinner."

"Finally! I thought we'd never leave!" Ruffnut whined, stomping off towards the castle. Hiccup laughed at her.

Astrid waited for Hiccup to say his farewell to Razor Neck, before she left with him and Stormfly. Toothless lagged behind, attention completely focused on the keepers. He wanted to make sure they didn't try anything as they left, and Hiccup was pleased to see such a reaction out of his weary best friend.

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><p>Harry grinned at his friends, finishing his relation of the story of the egg. It hadn't been false, it was a trick. He replayed the scene happily in his head. Of course, now there was the bigger issue of how to <em>breathe under water</em>. For an hour. His friends were sure that would be the easy part, and Harry thought so too. If he hadn't taken the tip from Cedric, he might never have found out what it was all about.

Harry sat down in the warm water, bubbles swirling around his midsection. The golden egg sat on the side of the bath, watching him. Harry glared at it, annoyed. He'd tried opening it again, but it didn't work. Maybe Cedric had just been playing with him. Harry sighed. \_

"Try putting it in the water," a girl's voice startled Harry, making him jump. The voice giggled and Harry looked around, recognising the ghostly form of Moaning Myrtle.

"What are you doing here?" he stuttered, trying to cover his body with as many bubbles as he feasibly could. Myrtle laughed, a high pitched squeaky sound, and flew towards the statue in the bath. She circled it for a minute before looking at Harry.

"Aren't you going to try it?" she asked.

Harry looked confused. "Try what?" he asked.

She laughed and flew closer, making Harry move away, trying to seem subtle. It was hard with the ghost trying to press her transparent form closer to him with every move either made.

"Putting it in the water. That's what that other boy did," she said.

"Cedric?" he asked, surprised.

She nodded and giggled again. Harry looked at the egg thoughtfully. It was worth a shot, really. He was willing to try anything at this point.

Harry moved away from Myrtle to grab the egg, then held it over the water. He dipped it in and opened it, watching as a gold glow emanated from within. He was pleased that there wasn't any screaming, so he dipped his head under and was immediately engulfed in the pretty sound of singing. It was certainly pleasant compared to the other sounds the golden egg tended to make.

'Come and seek us where our voices sound,

We cannot sing above the ground,

We've taken what you'll sorely miss,

An hour long you'll have to look,

But a past an hour, the prospects black

Too late, it's gone, it won't come back.'

Harry popped back to the surface, breathing deeply. He looked at the egg as he closed it, confused. What had it all meant? The only thing he could think of was swimming.

"Myrtle, are there mermaids in the black lake?" he asked, completely genuine.

Myrtle giggled. "Very good, took the other boy ages to figure it out," she said, floating closer to Harry. He looked to her, a smile on his face, then back to the egg. Now the only problem was breathing for an hour.

Hermione grinned as she talked to Harry. They were all happy they'd found the mystery of the egg. Now it was really up to her, for reading and figuring out a spell which would allow him to breathe for

an hour underwater was her area of expertise. Surely it wouldn't be too hard?

The large doors to the Great Hall opened and the golden trio looked up. The Vikings strolled in, all looking very tired, rather late for their dinner. The twins immediately sat down and started eating, with Snotlout not far behind. Harry looked away from them, towards the Hufflepuff table, coincidentally at the same time Cho Chang turned her head. He blushed and looked away, back to his friends.

Hiccup sat down and leant against Astrid, sighing deeply. Harry looked at him, wondering what the matter was. He sat next to Hiccup, with Hermione on the other side of the table across from Harry. Ron sat next to Harry, looking at the Vikings as well.

"What happened?" Harry asked, confused and curious.

Hiccup sighed and sat up straight, after a shove from Astrid of course. "It's nothing. We were having a race and someone burnt Toothless's tail, so we crashed. And you know, Charlie got angry. It wasn't really our fault, though."

Ron looked up. "That's Charlie for you; he's pretty protective of family," he said, as though that explained everything.

Hiccup looked to Astrid. "Ron, brother or not, they're being very rude to us, and we won't tolerate such feats," she said.

Hermione looked at her and smiled. "That's a good attitude to have, so long as you're not retaliating or causing it yourself."

"How? We didn't even know wizards existed until a few months ago. So you know, it's not actually our fault," Astrid said.

Fishlegs looked up from his books and shook his head. "There have been several mentions of wizards in the past few years, you just have to read the right books," he said, matter-of-factly.

Hiccup and Astrid turned their heads, shocked. "What?"

Fishlegs swallowed the food, ready to explain. "Well, there have been books â€“ they were hard to find, too â€“ about a group of wizards who wanted our help to kill others. Apparently, in exchange for our help, they would kill the dragons. That was about the time when your grandfather was chief, Hiccup."

Hiccup looked down. "You knew this, and you didn't think to tell us?" he asked, shock and anger leaking into his voice.

Fishlegs nodded, not seeing what the issue was. "Yeah. Well, according to the books, the alliance has gone, but it can always come back if the one who initiated it states so. Apparently he is the most powerful dark wizard, but I can't remember his name. vole mould?" he said, trailing off into a haze as he tried to remember what the name had been.

"Voldemort?" Hermione suggested.

Fishlegs nodded and pointed his finger triumphantly. "Yeah, that one â€“ wait, how do you know?" he asked, pausing.

Hermione looked to Harry. He sighed. "He's the darkest wizard. He killed my parents and gave me this." He gestured towards his lightning scar. All the Vikings gasped, the twins marvelling at the scar and not registering what the wizard had just said. Harry rolled his eyes and continued. "Anyway, he supposedly died, but I don't think he ever did."

Hiccup looked worriedly towards Astrid and Fishlegs. "If he comes back, he could make us kill people," he said dejectedly.

"And now we've got dragons..." Astrid trailed off.

"There's no telling how many wizards we could kill!" Fishlegs concluded, worried.

Hiccup shook his head, finally seeing it, finally knowing the truth. He understood why Dumbledore was acting the way he was, why he had kept them here for the rest of the year, why he was watching them like a hawk, how he knew they didn't fight the dragons, and even why he'd brought dragons into the first task. It was all part of his plan to make sure they weren't going to help Voldemort.

"The contract...it's not up to us, is it?" he asked.

Fishlegs shook his head. "No, it never was. In one of the texts, it mentions that Haddock was forced, some of his dear ones killed. The contract will never become invalid...well, there was one way, but that's too stupid," he said slowly.

"Fishlegs, we can't kill wizards, dragons or people. And we certainly can't let any of our own men die because of this stupid contract and one silly dark wizard," Astrid said.

Hermione looked at them. "He's not silly. He's the most powerful dark wizard of all time, someone you shouldn't mess with."

Astrid shook her head. "I refuse to believe there isn't anything we can do."

"What's the way to stop it, Fishlegs?" Hiccup asked, ignoring the girls' argument.

Fishlegs looked down. "I don't know, the page cut off. It only said that there was a way to stop it, but it didn't say how."

Hermione perked up. She grinned and looked towards her friends, then to the Vikings. "We might have a copy of the book. We have nearly every book in the library here, maybe even yours. We can help!" she said happily.

Harry shook his head slowly. "Can we at least wait until after the second task, please? I don't want to drown."

Hermione looked apologetically at the Vikings. "Of course. The priority at the moment is Harry."

"Library huh? Need some help?" Fishlegs asked.

"You good with books?"

All the Vikings started to laugh. Snotlout pretended to roll a tear away with his finger, finding the question hilarious. Harry looked to Hermione curiously, wondering what it was all about. Fishlegs looked to Hermione, the first to calm down.

"Sorry. Back at Berk, its standard knowledge that I've read most of the texts and can remember almost all of it. Hiccup comes a close second of course," he said quickly, looking towards Hiccup.

Hermione smiled. "Well, we have to find a spell that will allow Harry to breathe underwater. Are you up for it?" she asked.

He grinned. "Always."

Ruffnut and Tuffnut glared at them. "Keep your flirting to a minimum please," Tuffnut groaned.

Hermione blushed as everyone else laughed.

The conversation they'd had previously apparently forgotten, they enjoyed their dinner. Harry couldn't help but worry for the safety of the small Viking, the one who would have to worry more about the contract than they had. It seemed as though it was all the beginning of a very dangerous road, one which wizards and Vikings would have to work together to escape alive.

## 11. Chapter 11

All of Fishleg's and Hermione's work had paid off. Not only had they found a way for Harry to breathe underwater for an hour, they had found a solution which wasn't a spell, but a plant, which meant Harry wouldn't have to practise. Fishlegs was telling Hiccup they'd had some help from Neville Longbottom, whom, according to the description, was as interested in Herbology as Fishlegs was in dragons. If this was correct, Hiccup was sure he was a pretty nerdy person.

The Vikings would have to leave soon because Dumbledore had asked the group to be at the lake two hours early. It was something about a job they would have to do. Hiccup got the feeling he was referring to some dragons, but he wasn't sure. Dumbledore had sounded different, more stressed than usual. In the meantime, however, the Vikings intended on spending as much time with their own dragons as possible, feeling as though they hadn't spent much time with them over the course of their stay.

Hiccup looked at Toothless, a lazy grin on his face. The dragon looked happily at him and leant against the fire place, finding it too cold to sit outside. Hiccup felt bad for Harry, who would have to be in the cold for an hour in the water. They'd been swimming in the Black Lake, however accidental it had been and it wasn't warm in the slightest.

Astrid walked over to Hiccup, Stormfly in tow. She sat down and leant against Hiccup, sighing deeply.

"What's the matter?" Hiccup asked, knowing immediately something was wrong.

Astrid looked at him, moving her eyes but not her head from his shoulder. "I don't know, everything at the moment," she replied softly, sort of mumbling.

Hiccup nodded and gently held her hand in both of his. She formed a small, thankful smile. "I suppose I'm just struggling to get to terms with everything. Mostly about us possibly having to work with this dark wizard."

Astrid cast a glare towards the fire. "We will find a way to back out of it, Hiccup. There is no way I'm killing an innocent person, wizard or not."

Hiccup nodded again. "Yeah. We have to make sure he doesn't find out about our dragons, though."

Astrid let out a small gasp. "If he did, he would have the ultimate weapon," she said, understanding.

"That's never going to happen. He'll have to kill us because I'm not helping," Hiccup said firmly.

"And if he kills Toothless?"

Hiccup shook his head determinedly, reaching a hand out to touch the dragon's wing. "I wouldn't let him. I would take the fall."

Toothless made sounds of sorrow, clearly expressing that he would rather die than be without his Viking. It was a rather sad topic to be talking about, but it was clear it needed to be said.

Their conversation came to an end as the twins walked lazily into the room. Their zippleback followed closely behind, each head watching their respective rider. Hiccup turned to them, waiting for the words they so clearly itched to share.

"We were thinking," Tuffnut started.

Astrid groaned. "Never a good sign," she muttered. Hiccup sent her a sly grin, agreeing.

Ruffnut rolled her eyes and continued, "Hiccup gets to fly Razor Neck, the most dangerous dragon here!"

"but we don't get to take ours out of the cages," Tuffnut said.

They both nodded, looking at Hiccup firmly. It was the first time Hiccup had seen them look so determined about something that didn't include explosions. Oh, Hiccup thought, their dragon combined with the Chinese Firebolt could create more devastation than three Zipplebacks put together. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

Astrid looked at the twins, astonishment clear on her face. "You guys are thinking about the dragon?" she asked, clearly missing what Hiccup had noticed.

Tuffnut shrugged. "Have you seen his fire?"

Ruffnut grinned. "It could blow up an entire village," she exclaimed happily.

Astrid laughed. "Not even Toothless can blow up an entire village," she pointed out. Toothless growled, unhappy that she was talking as though he wasn't there. She brushed him off, more focused on the twins' clearly destructive thoughts.

"A small one," Tuffnut suggested.

"It's Toothless we're talking about. If Hiccup wasn't his rider, Toothless would be able to do more things," Ruffnut stated, clearly ignoring Toothless's warning grumbles.

Tuffnut nodded. "If we were, who knows what we could do!" he raised his voice, excited about the possibilities. Hiccup shuddered, also thinking of the devastation they could cause.

Astrid rolled her eyes and glared slightly at the twins. "If you want to fly your dragon, there are going to be rules," she said strongly, leaving no room for arguments.

The twins' eyes gleamed. They had really only heard the part where Astrid had given them permission to let their dragon out of the cage. Hiccup laughed to himself, watching the scene unfold. Toothless gave him a funny look, but did nothing. He was still upset with the twins' blatant disrespect for him and his rider, the only one who could really ride the Night Fury. However, it would be funny to watch the twins try to fly with the stirrup fitted to his bad leg and the prosthetic tail.

Astrid turned to Hiccup, a smile on her face. Hiccup smiled himself. He realised how long it had been since he'd seen her smile a real, genuine smile. It seemed as though they were always stressed these days, with no room to be happy and be themselves. Hiccup hadn't realised how much he missed Berk, how much he wished he could be in the open skies, with the people of his village, Toothless sharing his room, the house with his father. This was not his home. This school was little more than a prison for the Vikings. Hiccup just had to survive a little longer here before he could go home; sort out the dark wizard issue and they would be free.

Hiccup looked up at the clock above the fireplace, seeming to have forgotten the time. He frowned when he realised they had little over ten minutes to get to the Black Lake. How had the time gone by that quickly?

"Tuffnut, get Snotlout and Fishlegs please," he said, looking at the twins expectantly.

Tuffnut looked at Hiccup briefly before deciding not to argue. Hiccup was surprised, and he noticed Astrid bore the same shocked expression, but they covered it quickly when the other Vikings emerged from their chambers.

"Ready to go?" Hiccup asked.

Fishlegs sighed dramatically, turning to Meatlug, who stood lazily

behind him. "I'll miss you, girl." He turned to Hiccup. "Do I really have to go? We were just writing more in our personal journal."

Before Hiccup could answer, Tuffnut snickered. "You have a journal?"

Fishlegs turned red, turning to the side. "None of your business," he muttered.

Ruffnut grinned. "I think we should steal it; see what kinds of things he write in it," she said to her brother.

"Agreed." They bent their heads, planning ways in which they would be able to steal the journal off of the nerdiest of the Vikings.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and turned to Astrid. Her eyes were sparkling with amusement, at either the twins' reaction or the thought that Fishlegs kept a journal. He was glad to see that she was happy.

"Can we please get a move on now?" Hiccup asked, interrupting the twins' schemes.

For a moment it looked as though Snotlout would disagree, but a quick glare from Astrid had all the teens out the door and heading towards the Black Lake. Hiccup walked beside Astrid, neither speaking. The twins yabbered on behind them, talking about some nonsense or the other.

At the base of the stairs, Hiccup realised one of the dragons had been following them. He smiled gently and told the near black but blue Night Fury to go back up the stairs.

Toothless whined unhappily, not wanting to leave Hiccup's side.

"I'll be back later, bud. Look after the other dragons for me," he said, giving Toothless a gentle hug.

Toothless whined again, but turned and headed slowly back up the stairs, every so often turning back to look at Hiccup. Hiccup stood at the base of the stairs, waiting to make sure the dragon actually made it upstairs.

Once Hiccup was satisfied Toothless was going back to the room, the teens set off. They would be late, but none of them really cared. Dumbledore wasn't scary, anyway.

\* \* \*

><p>Ron and Hermione weren't around to help Harry on the morning of the second task. For some reason, he felt like they'd skipped out. When he needed them most, they weren't there. Harry felt slightly better knowing he wouldn't drown in the lake this afternoon, but that was the only thought which could console him. He didn't know what he would have to deal with: all sorts of creatures lived in the lake.</p>

Harry sat in the common room, surrounded by other Gryffindors who were waiting to head down to the pier. They weren't exactly talking

to Harry, but he didn't mind. He wanted to stay alone for a little longer before he needed to go and ask Neville about the plant. Hopefully he'd been able to get some.

There was a pause inside the common room, all silent, and Harry could faintly hear the sounds of claws on the stairs outside. If Harry had to take a guess, he would have said one of the dragons was sneaking out of the Viking's room.

Two of the first years, opened the door and looked out. From their reaction, it was definitely one of the dragons. The Weasley twins were up and at the door before anyone could stop them, the two first years backing away silently. It became apparent they were frightened of whatever dragon was out there.

Harry followed behind, curiously gazing around the twins. Fred and George grinned as the large black creature stared at them in the dark stairwell. His green eyes glowed, the only part of his body evident. Harry knew it was Toothless, he was the only black dragon he could think of. Besides, if he was out, chances were so were the rest of the Vikings.

"Reckon Hiccup'll mind if we take his pet out for a while?" Fred said to George, mischievous grins spreading across both their faces.

A low rumble was heard from the chest of the dragon, but that didn't stop the Weasleys.

"Nah, clearly he didn't take him with him for a reason," George said.

Harry stepped up between them, blocking their path to Toothless. "I'm pretty sure it won't be Hiccup who minds, guys." He gestured to the dragon which was slowly slinking away, creeping closer into the darkness.

Fred and George both turned towards the dragon, noticing how much further he seemed to have gone. The sighed angrily. "Well, those Ruff and Tuff people would probably let us borrow their dragon," George said thoughtfully.

Harry groaned and turned away angrily. "Maybe when they're around," he muttered.

Fred chuckled and patted Harry on the back. "You worry too much. We wouldn't consider doing something like that when they're not around to watch."

George grinned. "Yeah. Besides, who never said six heads weren't better than one?"

Harry looked away, slightly glaring at the floor. "I think everyone who knows anything would say that's not true."

"You're a bad sport, Harry." George pouted dramatically.

Harry smiled softly. "We wouldn't want you guys getting in trouble, would we?"

This made the Weasley twins both laugh. It became apparent the black

dragon behind them was forgotten, the new thought of taken the two headed one out for a spin appeared more exciting than him. Harry looked to see that Toothless was already heading back down the stairs slowly, making almost no noise.

"It wouldn't be us getting in trouble," Fred said. Harry had to assume they were talking about the Vikings.

"Yeah. Besides, if they do happen to catch us," George began, a grin on his face.

"We'll just set the dragon on them," Fred finished, grinning gleefully.

Harry laughed, imagining Filch being chased by the two headed dragon. He could just imagine the horror struck look on his face when the dragon's twin tails knocked over his precious stands or made a mess on the floor. He'd probably be angrier if the dragon ruined his grounds, than if it harmed him.

"Too bad we can't use that big red one," George said wistfully.

Harry looked up. "Red one?" he asked curiously.

Fred turned to Harry, nodding. "Yeah. Snotlout's dragon. He's a piece of work, all flame and bite."

"Doesn't help that Snotlout's rough with him," George agreed.

Harry paused. He couldn't remember if he'd met Snotlout's dragon. He'd seen the twins' at a glance, flying around and blowing up different parts of the school, but he hadn't seen many of the others. Astrid's was a mystery, and he didn't really care much for Fishlegs' dragon.

Harry glanced at the clock above the mantle and sighed. "Have either of you seen Ron this morning?" he asked.

Fred looked to George, their scheming taking a break for a moment. They turned back to Harry, both shaking their heads. "No. We thought he'd be with you, seeing how you two are friends again," Fred said.

Harry shook his head. "Haven't seen him since last night. Or Hermione," he added.

George snickered a little at this. "Well, she could be with Krum."

"What makes you say that?" Harry asked, sounding offended. Why wouldn't his friend tell him if she weren't going to be with them, but with some other guy who was part of an opposing school?

George shrugged. "No reason," he laughed.

Harry was about to argue, but thought better. He would have rather to be preparing for his dip in the cold waters of the lake later on.

Fred and George both put an arm on Harry's shoulder reassuringly. "They'll show up. They wouldn't miss your performance," Fred said.

Harry nodded and watched as the twins went back into the dorm room, heading to some of their fellow class mates. He leant against the door for a moment, deciding what to do. He didn't have anything \_to\_ do. No homework since the teachers had gone relatively easy for the weekend, and his friends were gone. What had his life come to now?

He sighed and went to his room, gathering his things and preparing himself, making sure he knew what had to be done for the task.

\* \* \*

><p>Dumbledore already stood on the banks of the lake as the Vikings approached. Gobber and Moody stood beside him, looking as dull as ever. Well, Gobber wasn't paying any attention and Moody looked pretty sour. Behind them stood Barty Crouch, talking to Charlie Weasley and Jeremy Gerard.</p>

Gobber waved as Hiccup approached, seeming happier that his friends were walking towards him. The Keepers and Barty walked over to Dumbledore, standing beside him. Hiccup noticed how Charlie and Jeremy kept sending glances towards the lake, as though they were nervous.

"You're late," was the first thing Dumbledore said, a disapproving frown on his wrinkled face.

Hiccup shrugged. "Had some issues with a dragon," he said casually. Gobber immediately knew what he meant, however the news seemed to frighten the wizards just that little bit. It made Hiccup feel slightly better inside. It was good to know they still had some effect on the wizards with their dragons.

Astrid walked beside Hiccup, which seemed to make Charlie and Jeremy uncomfortable, but it made Hiccup feel better. "You wanted to talk to us?" she prodded.

Moody stepped up next to Dumbledore, who was in the front, levelling off with the headmaster. "It's about the second task," he started, looking at all the Vikings in turn. "We brought over a couple of water dragons, which we have little knowledge of, but it is \_imperative\_ that you make them calm, at least around young Harry."

"Sounds like you want us to help you cheat," Astrid stated bluntly.

Dumbledore shook his head. "Only to help the boy survive."

"Seems like this \_Harry Potter\_ is a very special character around you strange wizards," Snotlout snorted.

"He's got a past and a future which are very important to the survival of the wizard race," Dumbledore said, a frown forming on his face.

Hiccup shook his head. "I don't really care, we'll help. What do you want us to do? It's not like we can really tell them specifically what Harry looks like, without him actually finding out, and I'm guessing you don't want him to find out?" he asked smugly.

Charlie stepped forward, holding out a piece of clothing. Hiccup took the guess and assumed they were Harry's. The Keepers weren't as stupid as they looked. "We have this. We tried before, but the dragons didn't respond and didn't sniff the clothes. We hoped you would have better luck," he explained.

"What sort of dragons are we dealing with?" Fishlegs asked, immediately about to launch into methods to help figure out a solution to their issue.

Charlie shrugged. "A Surgesea," he said.

Fishlegs seemed stumped. Hiccup paused, never having heard of this type of dragon before. Well, it would be alright to meet a new dragon, wouldn't it? It would take a little longer than expected, however, to train these new dragons. They would have to figure out how they should go about it.

"Another thing, before we introduce you to the two dragons, there are people at the bottom of the lake. It would be helpful if you could tell the dragons this so they don't eat them for lunch," Dumbledore said.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Why would you have people in the water anyway? Trying to kill your students?" she accused.

Dumbledore shook his head. "They are protected by a powerful spell, asleep and breathing, fully alive," he explained.

"Then why do you need our help to make the dragons not attack them? Surely the spell will help with that," Hiccup was confused. They weren't making sense. Why would the wizards bring in dragons, not knowing what they would do, hoping they wouldn't kill their competition? They were so stupid. They really should be thankful the Vikings were staying for as long as they were. Their dragons could have easily ruined their school, and taken them back to their home.

Dumbledore sighed. "You don't need to understand. Magic isn't the answer to everything."

For some reason, this infuriated Astrid. "Neither is relying on the help of a bunch of Vikings! We have a reputation for treachery and stealing, you know this, right?" she all but yelled.

Moody snapped at this moment. "We don't have time right now. Deal with this later. Get to work." He pointed to the water.

Astrid glared at him. "You'll be lucky if we don't tell the dragons to attack this Harry boy. Or better yet, you," she sneered at him. Hiccup quickly pulled her away before she brought out her fists and started a brawl. It was clear she wouldn't win against the wizard, but he wasn't about to tell her that. He just needed her to stop making it worse for them.

Charlie stopped at the lake, checking that all the Vikings were following. Hiccup looked around, confused. "Where are the dragons?" he asked.

The keepers pointed down, into the water. Hiccup's heart sank. How were they supposed to train dragons which lived in the water\_. They probably didn't have a way which would allow them to breathe under the water either. They just assumed they'd be able to work like this? These wizards were that dumb.

Fishlegs squinted into the water, a smile forming on his face. Hiccup looked down, realising immediately what made the book worm so gleeful. Inside two small cages â€“ not what they were happy about â€“ were two Thunderdrums, a tidal class dragon which Hiccup had had numerous encounters with. Astrid noticed and sighed dramatically. She'd never really gotten along with the Thunderdrums.

"Well, one good thing that's happened today," Astrid murmured to Hiccup. He smiled at her softly.

"Surely that's not the only good thing?" he asked gently.

She shrugged, leaning towards him. "Getting close to it." She closed her eyes, her fists clenching. "They just treat us as though we're here solely for their benefit."

"Yeah. I know." Hiccup had noticed this too, of course. The wizards didn't give the Vikings much time to themselves, and the short time they did, it was always to work on their project. They weren't in any of the Viking's good books at that point.

Hiccup turned to Charlie. "So, how are we supposed to train them?" he asked curtly.

Charlie waved his wand momentarily, and the cages around the dragons lifted. Hiccup stepped back from the water edge as the two Thunderdrums surged to the surface, trying to get away from their cage. Just as they breached the surface, a rope pulled them back, stopped them from spreading their small scaled wings and taking flight.

"They can come to the surface here, but that is it." Charlie explained.

Fishlegs watched the two dragons carefully. "Where did you find them? They are still young."

Jeremy turned up, looking at the two dragons. "Had them since they was born. My brother found their mother 'nd 'er eggs. New dragon species and all, he kept em and said I could ave em when they was older."

Astrid cringed next to Hiccup. He himself didn't feel too good about this story. No one should have to keep a dragon in custody all its life. At least with the dragons of Berk, they weren't in cages; they chose to be with their Vikings. Well, Toothless not so much, but Hiccup was sure he didn't mind after a while.

"Then why do you need help with them? Just call your brother," Snotlout stated shortly.

Jeremy looked down. "Wish I could. He died. That's why I have them. I wasn't supposed to get them for another few years."

Hiccup had to feel sorry for him. He had inherited the dragons before he was ready to. Before they were ready to. It was no wonder they were annoyed at being in the cage. Well, that and dragons shouldn't be kept in cages.

Charlie was getting agitated. He pushed the shirt at Hiccup, letting it fall for a moment before the one legged boy caught it. "You've got less than an hour now. Get cracking." Then both he and Jeremy walked away, leaving the Vikings with the dragons.

"They've got some trust in us," Fishlegs observed.

"Only because they think they've got us in their grasp," Snotlout said. Hiccup was just thinking he'd finally said something smart when he ruined it. "But we'll show them who's boss when we unleash our dragons on them!"

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Maybe not such a good idea, Snotlout."

They paused for a moment, staring at the two dragons. Hiccup looked at them thoughtfully. "Ok, split into two teams, I guess it's the best way to get it done quickly," he said finally.

"Um, Hiccup, what exactly are we supposed to be doing?" Tuffnut spoke up for the first time. Hiccup had almost forgotten he was there. Wow, that's a first. The twins were always the loud ones.

Astrid turned. "We're going to make sure these dragons don't attack Harry," she explained.

"That's cheating," Ruffnut said.

"It would be much more fun if they attacked him," Tuffnut snickered.

"Teach them a lesson," Ruffnut agreed.

Hiccup looked to Astrid, shaking his head, a small smile on his face. She grinned and listened to the twins' bickering. They were pretty funny sometimes.

"Ok, I'll work with the green one. Astrid, your team can have the blue one." Hiccup looked to the two young Thunderdrums in the water. They had large jaws, both with small yellow eyes on the tops of their heads. Razor sharp teeth were exposed, surrounding the entire jaw. Hiccup noticed a muzzle around their mouths, making sure they couldn't produce their concussive sounds, which could kill a man at close range. Their scales were shiny, probably from being in the water for such a long period of time.

Astrid nodded. "You choosing teams?" she asked.

Hiccup shrugged. "I'll take the twins."

She laughed. "Fishlegs and Snotlout for me? How lucky am I?" she

said sarcastically.

Fishlegs snorted indignantly. "I'm not that bad, you know."

Astrid nodded. "I wasn't referring to you, Fishlegs. You'll be more helpful than Snotlout."

Hiccup rolled his eyes and watched the twins for a moment, before turning to the green dragon. He sighed angrily. This would take a while. These wizards were going to get their reward for the captivity of the Vikings soon, Hiccup could promise them that. It would make up for the poor treatment of the dragons too. Hiccup wouldn't let them get away with anymore of this.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry stood on the edge of the pier, nerves bundling inside of him. His friends hadn't shown up yet, which hadn't helped with his nerves. Why the day of the second task? Couldn't they have chosen a different day to skip out on him? Clearly not.</p>

Slowly the pier was starting to gather with people, all gearing up to watch the task. Harry noticed people's sly glances to him, some clearly saying they hoped he didn't make it. Harry swallowed. Still no sign of Neville. Maybe the Slytherin's would get their wish. He wouldn't be able to participate for more than 20 seconds if he couldn't breathe under the water.

Harry sat down, dangling his feet over the edge of the pier. It was afloat in the middle of the lake, about a metre above the water. Even if he had wanted to touch the freezing water, he wouldn't be able to in this area. There was a platform which they would probably use for the start and finish, but they weren't allowed on it yet.

A movement in the crowd caught Harry's eye and he saw Hiccup moving towards him. Following him were Astrid and Fishlegs. He couldn't see the twins or Snotlout behind them, just assuming they were taking the time off to do something by themselves.

Harry noticed Hiccup's eyes narrow onto him, as he made a beeline for him. He noticed Astrid trying to pull him back, then Hiccup telling her something, pulling away from her grasp and walking towards Harry. Astrid and Fishlegs both stayed where they were, not looking too sure where they were supposed to go.

Hiccup stopped at Harry and sat beside him, dangling his prosthetic leg over the edge. For a moment, Hiccup feared that it would fall into the cool water and he'd never get it back, but it went out the window when he realised the Viking flew with it constantly.

"I needed to give you a warning," Hiccup said softly.

Harry nodded slowly, unsure of what to make of it. Had the Vikings done something to the task? Harry immediately figured there would be dragons in the task.

Hiccup held out a piece of what seemed to be red cloth. He kept looking around suspiciously, clearly not wanting anyone else to see what he was doing. Harry thought he was being shady about something.

Harry took the cloth from his hand, looking at it. "What is it for?"

Hiccup looked around, saying almost loudly, "For luck," before he bent down and explained properly. "I can't tell you exactly, but when you get to where you need to be, there are two guards. Show them this and they won't attack you." Hiccup sounded so sincere, Harry felt as though he could trust anything the young Viking told him.

"Thank you," he said.

Hiccup shook his head. "Don't thank me yet. You haven't seen what you're up against."

Harry nodded. "Well, I'm sure this will help." He waved the red cloth for a moment.

"I hope so," Hiccup muttered. "Well, good luck," he added cheerfully as he stood. Hiccup waved to Harry as he walked happily back to his friends. Harry was confused about his behaviour, but wasn't going to question it.

Harry turned the cloth in his hands, again wondering its purpose. If Hiccup had given it to him secretly, it must have been important. He wasn't about to show or tell anyone since it was clearly not something meant to be shared.

Stuffing the cloth in his pocket, Harry stood. He noticed a gathering around the lowered platform. He saw Fleur, Krum and Cedric standing on it, looking pretty confident. Harry gathered his courage and walked towards them. When Dumbledore saw Harry, he smiled. Harry felt better seeing the headmaster, as well as Professor Moody who stood beside him. They were both helping a lot with the Tournament. In a strange way, so were the Vikings. That was probably thanks to Dumbledore, for inviting them. Harry wasn't going to worry about the logistics at that moment: he needed to find Neville. The task had a couple of minutes before it was about to start, and he was nowhere to be seen.

"Champions, prepare your spells," Dumbledore said loudly, loud enough for the audience to hear as well.

Cedric, Fleur and Krum pulled out their wands, prepared to cast their spells. Harry looked around the pier, searching for any sign of Neville.

A movement caught his eye, one which was heading straight for him. Harry noticed it was Neville, holding some sort of green plant. It looked gross, but Harry knew he would need it for the task.

"Here you go, Harry," Neville said, passing the green plant through the barriers. Harry almost dropped the slimy plant as he felt it, but refrained.

"Thanks," he said genuinely, looking at the gross weed in his hand.

Dumbledore began the countdown for the task, Harry shoving the weed into his mouth. At '2' the cannon went off, and the champions jumped

into the water. Harry choked for a moment, too consumed by the disgusting taste of the weed to swallow or jump into the water.

A push from behind had Harry swallowing the weed and plunging into the freezing water of the Black Lake.

## 12. Chapter 12

\*\*Ladies and gents, here is the edited version, much gratitude to my amazing editor. Please feel free to thank her for me :)\*\*

A sharp rush of water surrounded Harry, the cold enveloping his body. A terrible stinging sensation rumbled over his throat, causing him to paw at it urgently. His nostrils closed off, no air entering. Harry couldn't breathe. He felt a strange web-like growth on his hands and looked down, surprised when he saw a spongy-looking pattern between his fingers, connecting them like a web. His feet were two long flippers, flimsy and soft.

Harry gasped, bubbles escaping his mouth. Instead of entering his air, he was breathing water which entered his body through his neck, where a set of gills were placed on either side. Harry realised this was the effect of the Gillyweed, the plant Neville had provided him with.

Without wasting a moment, Harry leapt forward, diving deeper into the chilly water. With everything going on, the cold was the last thing he was thinking about. It wasn't uncomfortable, instead enveloping his body and keeping it at the right temperature.

He swam further down, the water becoming darker. It was harder to see clearly, yet he could still make out where he was. He found himself spatially aware of everything around him. It wasn't difficult to reach the bottom of the lake, where he swam steadily through the kelp infested waters. He had an inkling that what he was searching for lay on the bottom somewhere, or he would at least be able to spot it from there.

Harry propelled himself forward with his flipper feet, his hands guiding the way. His eyes scanned the murky waters as his gills worked at filtering the sand from the oxygen in the water.

A moment passed as the water stilled, making Harry instantly aware something was wrong. He paused and brought out his wand. It wasn't a second later that a Grindylow leapt at him and grabbed at Harry's heels. Harry shook off the little creature and swam quickly away, not bothering to wait for more foul beasts to stop him again.

Harry kept his gaze straight ahead, noticing how the water was getting progressively lighter. He also realised that he had been swimming upwards for quite a while, still following the water bed. That meant there was some sort of sand bank. He knew something was up ahead, the way the sand was forming shapes now.

The kelp surrounding Harry departed, leaving Harry in the open waters. In front of him was something he never imagined he would have to deal with underwater. Four wizards were floating in the water, attached to the lake bed by a piece of kelp around their ankles. Harry noticed their faces, realising they were all wizards he knew.

Ron and Hermione, Harry now knew why they weren't with him before the task had started.

Harry swam up to Ron, who appeared to be in a deep sleep. His eyes were closed and bubbles escaped his mouth every so often. Harry had barely touched Ron's arm when a large creature stirred the water and charged straight at the young wizard.

Swerving quickly, Harry managed to avoid the large beast. He looked up once he'd regained his composure and looked to see it was some sort of dragon. The dragon was large and green, attached to the lake bed by a long silver chain. Clearly, this was the guard Hiccup had been talking about, Harry remembered.

A thought struck Harry. He reached into his pocket, where he'd stowed away the red cloth given to him by the skinny Viking. He carefully held it in his hands, showing it to the dragon. The green beast gave Harry a glare before flicking its tail and positioning itself in front of a young blonde girl.

Behind one of the captives, Harry noticed another dragon. This one was blue, and a lot bigger. It looked as though it could do some damage too. The one he appeared to be guarding looked like Cho, but Harry could be wrong.

A movement caught Harry's eye and he turned to see Cedric Diggory swim up. His mouth was enveloped by a large bubble, which Harry knew to be the bubble head charm. Why hadn't he thought of that?

Cedric swam up to Cho and shot a spark at the kelp around her leg. He wasn't prepared for the dragon that ran straight into him, knocking both his wand and the girl out of his arms. Harry could only watch as Cedric recollected his wand and the girl, swimming quickly to the surface and out of reach of the dragons.

Harry waited for a moment next to Ron, as another figure swam up to them. This one was different, with the head of a shark and the legs of Viktor Krum. Harry stared as the head ripped the kelp from the lake bed and pulled both it and Hermione to the surface.

There were only two left now, Ron and the little blond girl. Harry expected that this girl was for Fleur, but he saw no sign of the girl. He made the rash decision to take both the girl and Ron, not wanting her to have to stay under the water for any longer than necessary.

He quickly broke the kelp around Ron's ankle and pulled Ron with him as he went to the little girl. Suddenly, a creature leapt in front of Harry, pointing a three pronged trident at him.

'Only one,' it hissed, before swimming away.

Harry blinked as the mermaid disappeared. He wouldn't let that being disturb him. He needed to help the girl. He waited a moment, before sparks shot from his wand and he was swimming upwards with the girl and Ron.

As he was swimming upwards, he felt the gills slowly disappearing and returning to regular skin. His feet were becoming more like feet and less like flippers, his hands less web-like. He took in a deep breath

and propelled himself upwards, quickly and with more urgency.

Harry just broke the water's surface as his flippers and gills vanished completely. He gasped, the air reaching his lungs as they normally should. As soon as Ron and the young girl were out of the water, they woke up and gasped too, being above the water for the first time in a long while.

Ron looked to Harry happily before they swam together, helping the little girl, to the docks where the other champions all sat. Fleur was looking at the young girl with happiness, her whole face alight with pure joy. Clearly she was overjoyed at the fact that Harry had saved the young girl.

Hermione reached down her hand and Harry grasped onto it. He thanked her as he collapsed onto the desk, Ron following suit. A towel was draped over him, then another. He sat up and wiped his face, looking at Hermione with a sullen expression.

"You did great Harry," Hermione cheered.

Harry looked at the lake with disdain. "I finished last, Hermione," he said.

Hermione shook her head. "Fleur didn't get past ze gwindilows." The misfortune of the French girl somehow managed to cheer all three of them up. Harry hugged both Ron and Hermione. He felt someone's eyes on him, causing him to look up. He just locked eyes with Hiccup before he turned and walked away. Harry was happy, the little Viking had helped him through the challenge, even though he didn't have to. He'd have to thank them later.

There was a pause as Dumbledore announced the winners. Harry listened carefully through the muffled microphone spell the professor had put on his wand. "In fourth place, earning 25 points, Fleur Delacour. In third place, Viktor Krum, taking 40 points." There was a loud burst of talking, disagreeing with the scores. Clearly they didn't want Harry to be winning the points, if he was to be ranked above the star quidditch player of course.

"Tied for equal first are Cedric Diggory and Harry Potter. Cedric earning 45 points with the bubble head charm, and because of Harry's desire to help not just his own target, but the others too, he is rewarded 44 points." Dumbledore paused. "These scores will aid our competitors in the final task, which will be held next semester," he finished.

Harry grinned and hugged his two friends. "I'm second!"

Hermione laughed and helped Harry to his feet. She then proceeded to help Ron up, who stumbled a moment before regaining his balance. Harry chuckled and draped an arm over both his friends.

"I think we need to celebrate," he said happily.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Don't worry, we'll be celebrating tomorrow," she said knowingly.

Harry groaned. He had completely forgotten about the Yule Ball, the traditional event of the Triwizard Tournament. He hadn't even asked a

girl to go with him yet, and it was customary for the champions to have the first dance. Hermione already had a date, she just wasn't willing to share who it was. '\_You'll find out soon enough\_' was all she'd say. Ron and Harry were both pretty annoyed with the answer, but they would find out the following evening.

Hermione grinned. "Just ask someone," she said. She clearly knew, even though Harry hadn't told her that he had no date for the dance.

Harry sighed. They headed to the boats, which would allow them off the pier in the middle of the lake. Because they'd waited, they had a boat all to themselves. Only a few people remained on the pier, including the champions and their teachers. Harry shivered at the look Krum was giving him, but decided it meant little.

The boat led itself towards the mainland. Harry mulled over the events, still shivering from the cold water. He suddenly thought of Hermione and her role in being in the water. Hermione looked flushed, but otherwise like her usual self. He wanted to ask her again who she was going with, for now he figured she would be going with Krum. Of course, it would make sense. The people at the bottom of the lake were those who were close to the champions. Fluer's little sister Gabrielle ª Harry blushed, remembering the kiss Fleur had given both him and Ron when she was thanking them for rescuing the sister ª Cedric and Cho, who had rejected him to the dance in place of going with Cedric. It became apparent to Harry that Viktor Krum harvested feelings for his friend. He wasn't jealous as much as worried.

Harry hopped out of the boat as it reached the land. They didn't have much left of the day, considering the time it had taken for the task, and it was a Friday, so nothing important was on tomorrow. They walked together to the tower, and went to their respective dorms to put on some warmer clothes. Their swim in the cold lake wasn't leaving any favours.

As he was getting out of his swimming clothes, a red cloth fell to the ground. Harry hurried to pick it up and sighed. He pressed the small, damp red fabric to his chest, silently thanking Hiccup. He remember the cold eyes the dragon had given him, before he'd seen the cloth. Something in the dragon had changed, as though he was trying to do something nice for someone. Now that Harry thought about it, the more he realised the dragon was trying to please Hiccup. That boy had some bond with dragons, they all seemed to want to bend to his will.

Harry became incredibly grateful for everything the young Viking had done. It seemed as though Hiccup was doing it because he could, but Harry knew something deeper was going on. And he didn't know why, but he wanted to help.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup leant against the balustrade lazily. They were back at the tower, rolling about for no reason. Hiccup watched the students return from the lake and walk about the school, happy to have the rest of the day to themselves. Hiccup heard the sounds of his fellow Vikings inside the common room, but they were peaceful enough and Hiccup was happy standing outside. The wind was nice and he was

feeling homesick.<p>

The dragon sensed his emotions and pushed his head into Hiccup's back. The Viking laughed and turned around, tackling the Night Fury's head into a bear hug. Toothless grumbled and licked Hiccup, effectively getting him off.

Hiccup laughed and leaned against the railing, looking at the near black but blue dragon. Toothless sat up, his eyes just above Hiccup's, as he too, watched the boy. They stayed like that for a while, just staring at each other, until Hiccup sighed.

"This whole thing is stupid," he said. Toothless warbled in agreement.

Hiccup laid a hand gently on the dragon's shoulder, just where his wing connected with his body. "For one thing, the wizards shouldn't have done a tournament like this if they needed our help," Hiccup murmured. He was pretty annoyed with the whole situation, and this was just one thing amongst several.

He paused for a moment, his thoughts turning sour. "And if this 'Voldemort' is such a powerful being, who's supposed to be dead, by the way, then why would they just think to contact us now? Surely there were easier ways. And isn't us saying no enough?" Hiccup was blabbering, but Toothless didn't mind; it was good for the one legged Viking to be able to get these things off his mind.

Toothless moved closer to Hiccup as one of the other Vikings walked onto the balcony with Hiccup. Astrid stared down at the wizards, just as Hiccup had done previously. She then turned to look at both Hiccup and Toothless.

"Dinner's on soon, you know?" she said lightly.

Hiccup nodded, a smile creeping onto his face. "Yeah, I know."

Astrid noticed the smile and looked away. "What?" she asked curiously.

Hiccup looked to Toothless briefly, before walking and standing next to Astrid against the railing. "You know what's happening tomorrow night?" he asked.

She shrugged. "Sure, some ball," she replied casually.

Hiccup ignored her tone and pressed. "We've been invited." He was hoping she'd get the memo before he had to ask, but clearly this was not the case.

"You're planning on going." It wasn't a question, more a blunt statement. Usually Hiccup would be deterred, but not this time.

"I was hoping you'd go with me. Be my date for the evening?" Hiccup asked carefully, his voice nearly failing him. His heart fluttered a little at the smile which formed on her lips as she looked at the wizards below. He had liked her for ages, he knew she liked him back, but they'd never actually done anything together, other than their first flight, but that was because Hiccup was trying to keep

Toothless a secret.

Astrid turned to Hiccup. Her blue eyes shone with happiness as she nodded. "With you, it might not be so pointless."

And that was the best compliment Hiccup could have gotten from the strong willed Viking. He beamed and looked out at the buildings of the castle.

His mind wandered, as usual, but this time to their Berk life. What would happen once they returned? Hiccup would be immensely happy to return, but there were some things he'd miss about this place. For one, the fact that all the wizards were terrified of Toothless. That was fun. He laughed aloud at that thought, causing Astrid to look at him curiously.

Hiccup looked at Astrid and then to Toothless. "It's just amusing, everyone's reaction to him. He's not even that scary." Toothless snorted indignantly, which added fuel to Hiccup's laughter. The dragon was plenty scary, Hiccup knew this, but not around him.

Astrid headed towards the door, standing just to the inside. "Come on, the twins and Snotlout have already gone down for dinner," she said.

Hiccup nodded. Toothless snorted, trying to block Hiccup's way to the exit, but Hiccup tackled him and made his way around the dragon. Astrid watched, half annoyed and half amused, at the playful interactions Toothless and Hiccup had. Hiccup caught her staring, making her to look away. He smiled and slung his arm around her shoulder as they headed out of the common room.

Toothless watched the door close behind the two Vikings, his mood darkening. He hated having his rider so far away, when there was no way he could follow. He couldn't very well open the large wooden door, nor could he jump out the balcony.

He heard movements from inside the corridor and saw Fishlegs walking hurriedly to the door. Toothless used the dark room to slink in behind the large Viking and follow him out. Fishlegs didn't notice the dark dragon as he hurried down the steps, clearly something on his mind. Toothless knew Hiccup would tell him if it was something important, so he ignored Fishlegs.

Toothless headed down the steps once he was certain Fishlegs was down. He moved slowly and carefully, making no sounds. There was something he needed to do, which had nothing to do with Hiccup.

Hiccup laughed next to Astrid as the twins created yet another food abomination. They were becoming more restless with their lives in the tower, being unable to blow as many things up as they usually did was taking its toll on them. They were dead set on flying the Chinese Firebolt though.

Fishlegs sat opposite Hiccup, his face scrunched in thought. Hiccup figured whatever was on his mind, Fishlegs would tell them. He wasn't good at hiding things, everyone knew that.

A silence fell over the Great Hall, and Hiccup turned to see Dumbledore standing at the podium for announcements. Hiccup put down his knife and fork to listen.

"Congratulations to the four champions who competed so well in today's events," Dumbledore started, his eyes scanning the room. They paused on Harry, before moving on. "We look forward to the Yule Ball tomorrow night, as is tradition." Hiccup glanced to Astrid subtly, but she wasn't paying attention. He noticed, in the corner of his eye, Harry was looking rather depressed about something. Hiccup would ask about that later.

Dumbledore nodded and looked to the teachers. Hiccup noticed a look in his eyes, one that told him the professor wasn't telling them everything, as always, Hiccup thought bitterly.

"Due to recent events, it is necessary for all students to head straight for their common room after dinner," he announced. There were a chorus of confused muttering and blank looks. Obviously, everyone expected an explanation but when Dumbledore turned to return to his seat, everyone knew they weren't getting one. They were left in the dark once again.

Hiccup picked up his food once again and started to eat. The twins and Snotlout immediately started shooting reasons as to why the curfew was so early, while Fishlegs still looked thoughtful.

The wizards around them chattered away nervously, assuming that no explanation from Dumbledore meant something bad was going on. Hiccup was pretty sure whatever it was, nothing would hurt the Vikings. They were strong, and they had an army nothing could compare with.

Hiccup looked over to Harry, who was in light conversation with Hermione and Ron, over something Hiccup wasn't too sure about. "Hey, looking forward to the Ball tomorrow?" he asked.

The conversation immediately broke apart and Hermione grinned. "Yeah, you? Taking Astrid?" she hinted.

Hiccup looked to Astrid briefly. "Yeah," he mumbled. He noticed a small look of disappointment form on Ron's face, which almost made Hiccup jealous.

Astrid grinned and beamed. "If the little guy can dance of course," she teased. Hiccup looked at her, his eyes sparkling. He knew little about how the wizards danced and he was uncoordinated, but with Astrid, anything was possible.

Hermione nearly squealed, but the sound was too quiet to be classified as one. She reached around Hiccup, who she was next to, to tap Astrid's shoulder. "Come to our dorms tomorrow, we'll help each other get ready," she said happily.

Astrid smiled. "Sure, could be fun. At least, it'll be better than with Ruff." At the sound of her name, Ruffnut looked up and dropped a piece of meat she had in her hand.

"What's the matter with me?" she asked.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Nothing. Just talking about the Ball

tomorrow."

Ruff grinned. "Yeah? Got a date?" clearly the question was aimed at Hiccup.

"Yeah," Astrid replied.

Ruffnut laughed, as did Tuffnut. Snotlout looked pretty down, but he ignored them. Hiccup knew he still harvested feelings for the girl of his dreams, but he wasn't about to get jealous. Everyone knew Astrid was more likely to go with the one legged klutz than his burly cousin.

"Poor girl. Too kind to say no?" Tuffnut suggested, a snicker in his voice. They still liked to tease Hiccup, because he was still smaller than them but Hiccup had to have faith that that would change. After all, Stoic the Vast was his father.

Astrid reached across the table and hit Tuffnut upside the head. Snotlout snickered beside him. She pulled back and looked to Hermione, her anger at Tuffnut disappearing. "So, who are you going with?" she asked.

Hermione shook her head and held her finger to her lips. "I'll tell you later. I don't want these loons to know."

Astrid grinned. "Of course."

Hiccup rolled his eyes at the exchange. Girls were so strange sometimes. He turned to Harry, who was watching with an amused expression. "You going with someone, Harry?" he asked.

Harry sighed and looked at Hiccup. "Not yet. I haven't asked anyone either."

Hiccup nodded in understanding. "Yeah, can be hard to work up the guts."

Astrid lightly punched his shoulder. "We're not that scary," she said to him, then turned her attention to Harry. "I bet there are tons of girls who are waiting for you to ask. You are one of the champions after all."

Harry smiled at her. "Yeah, I guess. I just don't know many." He glanced to Hermione, who was looking away from him purposefully. Hiccup was surprised Hermione wasn't going with Harry, but, then again, he didn't know much about them.

The wizards around them started to move, signalling the end of dinner. The Vikings waited, surprised when Harry's trio also stayed. They appeared to be waiting to talk with the Vikings, which was nice of them. They really should have listened to their headmaster, Hiccup thought to himself.

Once the rush of the leaving wizards had cleared, the Vikings stood. Hiccup walked beside Harry and Astrid as they exited the hall. Hiccup looked behind as the twins started raving at Ron about his twin brothers, and how they were awesome. He heard something about a meeting between the two, in which Ron said he wasn't about to help with that. It was clear the wizard twins were just as bad as the

Viking ones.

A familiar rumble was heard as the group walked down the hallway. Hiccup sighed and turned around, surprised when he couldn't find the dragon. A gasp came out of Harry's mouth, and Hiccup turned to look in front, where Harry's eyes were fixed. He grinned as the large Night Fury blocked the hallway. He sat like a cat and watched Hiccup, his green eyes glowing in the dim light.

"Very funny." Hiccup smiled, walking up to the dragon. "You miss me?" he guessed. Toothless leapt forwards and pushed Hiccup to the ground, his tongue dragging a long slimy chain of saliva down his shirt. Hiccup groaned. "I liked that one," he muttered.

Hiccup turned to the group, looking amongst the Vikings. They had all paused due to the interruption, not abiding by the curfew just yet. "Who let him out?" Hiccup asked.

Everyone shrugged, unsure of how to answer. It wouldn't have been the twins, Hiccup knew they had left before him and Astrid, with Snotlout. He himself knew Toothless hadn't gotten out when he and Astrid had: he'd watched the door. He couldn't have gotten out the window since he couldn't fly on his own. The only other option was Fishlegs, who was the last one out. Hiccup's eyes narrowed in on Fishlegs, followed by all the others'. The large Viking stepped back and held up his hands.

"It wasn't on purpose! I didn't know he was going to follow me out!" he exclaimed defensively.

Hiccup sighed. "That's ok, Fishlegs, it's not your fault."

"Yeah, it is," Tuffnut countered.

Hiccup turned his head to look at him. "It doesn't matter now. It's not like Toothless could have gotten up to much."

Ruffnut snickered. "Sure he could have: he's virtually invisible," she said matter-of-factly.

Astrid groaned. "Ok, that's enough. We're not blaming anyone here, other than the dragon. There was clearly a reason he left the tower."

Ruffnut grinned. "To blow up stuff."

Tuffnut high fived his sister. "He'd be pretty good at it."

Hiccup slapped his hand to his forehead in annoyance. "Guys, come on. Toothless wouldn't have blown something up without us there. Besides, we didn't hear anything, did we?"

The twins nodded slowly, trying to come to terms with Hiccup's words. "He might have found a place really far away and stealthily torn it apart," Tuffnut suggested.

"Yeah! Or used magic," Ruffnut agreed.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Seriously? He's a dragon, not a wizard."

"He might have had accomplices," Tuffnut eyed Harry and Ron suspiciously.

Both wizards held up their hands. "Wasn't us, we were in the dining hall the whole evening."

Hiccup sighed and looked at Toothless. The dragon was watching the conversation with an amused look on his face. Hiccup knew there was a reason the dragon had snuck out, but he also knew Toothless would find a way to tell him when the time was right.

The group was still deep in their investigation of what Toothless was doing, as Hiccup started to walk off. Toothless followed quietly behind, his sharp claws making no sound on the stone floors. Harry noticed the duo walking off and followed carefully, ignoring his friends.

Hiccup made light banter with the dragon, who was pleased to have met back up with his rider. Harry subtly fell in step with him and smiled. Hiccup jumped slightly, but regained his composure after the Night Fury shot a teasing look his way. Hiccup glared at Toothless playfully.

"How do you stand them?" Harry asked in awe.

Hiccup shrugged. He rested his arm on Toothless's neck carefully, leaning some of his weight onto the dragon. He didn't seem to mind either, so Hiccup left it there. "They're not that bad. They're kind of fun sometimes," Hiccup said, looking straight ahead at the corridor.

Harry nodded slowly, not seeming to understand. "Yeah, I guess." He paused, then looked to Hiccup. "What are you planning on doing for the evening?"

Hiccup smiled to himself. "Well, the school's gonna be empty so Toothless and I are probably going to go out for a flight or something," he replied.

"Sounds like fun," Harry noted pleasantly.

Hiccup nodded enthusiastically. "Yeah, it's the best. Flying in general is pretty good, but I've got the best dragon for the job."

Toothless held his head up taller and Hiccup laughed. "I don't recall mentioning it was you, Toothless."

The dragon turned his head and formed a glare in his eyes. Hiccup knew he knew they were both playing, but he didn't think that Harry did.

"But he looks like he'd be pretty fast," Harry said in confusion.

"Yeah, well. Razor Neck isn't too bad either." This earn a glare from Toothless.

"Razor Neck?" Harry asked. He'd heard the name before, he just

couldn't remember where from.

Hiccup nodded. "The Hungarian Horntail." He thought for a moment, before adding, "You should meet him. He's quite a nice dragon once you get to know him." There was a disapproving grunt from Toothless, but he did nothing.

Harry shivered. "I don't think that's a good idea. One meeting was enough for me." He clearly couldn't forget the last time they'd encountered each other, which made Hiccup wonder what actually went on while he was facing the beast.

Hiccup nodded. They turned the corner which led up the stairs to their dorms. Hiccup sighed as he looked up the stairs. There weren't any stairs like these back at Berk. The only ones there were to the Great Hall, but even then, they were easy and pleasant compared to these ones.

"I wish we could fly up these," Hiccup muttered. Toothless mumbled in agreement as they started to climb the numerous amounts of stairs. At least Harry didn't have to walk all the way to the top like they did.

They walked up in silence, each in their own thoughts. Hiccup noticed the annoyed expression on his best friend's face, which made him aware something had happened during the dinner break. He wasn't about to ask though, not in the presence of the wizard. As much as Hiccup didn't mind Harry, he wasn't sure he'd understand what they were dealing with. For one, Dumbledore was just making life a living nightmare for them.

Hiccup paused as they reached the platform which held the entrance to the Gryffindor common room. They looked at each other for a moment, and Hiccup tried to decide whether or not all wizards were like him, or if they were more like Dumbledore and Malfoy.

"You got any ideas as to who you want to take to the ball tomorrow?" Hiccup asked.

Harry sighed and leaned against the wall. Toothless snorted, unhappy that Hiccup was making conversation. It was clear to Hiccup that the dragon wanted to go for a fly more than anything. He smiled reassuringly to him before facing the wizard.

"Not yet," he admitted, shaking his head.

Hiccup chuckled, leaning gently against Toothless. "Just have nerve. I'm sure a lot of girls would be willing to dance with you."

Harry smiled. "Yeah? Well, most of them already have dates." He sounded pretty bummed about it too.

Hiccup shrugged. "Worse comes to worse, you could always take Ruffnut. She'd be willing to go with you," he taunted.

Harry laughed and shook his head. "No, thanks. If that's the best you can offer, I don't think I want to visit Berk."

Hiccup fake gasped. "Nah, Astrid's the best we got." He was pretty happy he'd gotten her too.

"Well, count yourself lucky then," Harry grinned.

Hiccup nodded. "I do. Especially when I look at the past." He chuckled. "I wasn't really a Viking, to be honest. The only chief's son to be born like this, I reckon. And my dad, he's quite something. I'm just the hiccup of the family."

"Not anymore, though," Harry said.

Hiccup smiled and shook his head. He gestured to Toothless behind him. "All thanks to this guy."

"You're lucky to have such a good friend," Harry stated.

Hiccup nodded in agreement. "Yeah, he's a pretty good friend. Saved me a few times too," he said quietly. Toothless grumbled and looked into Hiccup's green eyes. Somehow, they were able to communicate better than with their own respective species. The bond between them was stronger than a forged sword.

"How did you meet him? From the records Hermione found, you guys were at war," Harry questioned.

Hiccup looked to Toothless, remembering the first time they'd met. It had been a dark night. The dragons had attacked their village, a raid as they called it. Hiccup was working in the armoury as an apprentice, that was all he'd ever be, but he had designed a weapon which would shoot a net into the sky. He'd had the opportunity to strike down the dragon once Gobber had left the shop, in which time Hiccup had shot down the Night Fury. As predicted, none of the Vikings had believed Hiccup, but he knew he had. The following day, he'd gone out to see where the dragon had landed, to find the dragon lying in a ditch. Unfortunately, Hiccup couldn't kill the dragon, and neither could the Night Fury kill him. And thus, the beginning of their endless relationship.

"We were at war, but Toothless and I defeated the queen, and we've befriended the dragons, so to speak." Hiccup wasn't sure Harry needed to hear all the details, so he made it short.

Harry nodded. "Wow, is that how you lost your leg?"

Hiccup looked down at the metal contraption where his leg used to be. "Yeah."

Harry realised the conversation had gotten a little personal and looked away. He looked at the glowing light beneath the common room door and sighed. "I should be going now. I'll see you tomorrow at breakfast."

Hiccup nodded and smiled. "Yeah, if this one doesn't eat me before then." He laughed, Harry joining in. Toothless grumbled and stalked up the stairs, waiting for Hiccup to say his final farewells. It didn't take long, and soon the two of them were heading up to their dorms.

They entered the dorms first, obviously considering they were blocking the only entrance below, and headed to the window.

"Toothless, let's break some records," Hiccup said with

determination. Toothless nodded his head in affirmation, and the two leapt off the balcony gracefully, shooting into the clouds.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry was already ready for bed by the time Ron finally made it back. He stared at him for a moment, the question in his eyes, before Ron sighed.</p>

"Those Viking twins kept going on about seriously stupid things. It was hilarious, you should have stayed," Ron chuckled, getting into his bed.

Harry rolled his eyes. "I'm sure they were. They seem like your brothers," he noted.

Ron laughed. "They're on another level."

"I'm sure they're saying that about your brothers," Harry said, looking at the roof of his bed. He yawned, indicating how late it had gotten. He hadn't noticed how long he'd actually been out with Hiccup and his friends. Time seemed to fly past when they were talking, and it was a nice change from the stress of school. Harry liked that.

Ron chuckled. "They invited us to go for a fly with them," he said randomly.

"Who did?" Harry asked. He knew he meant the Vikings, he just wanted to know who in particular had come up with the idea. He wasn't keen on flying on the black dragon, he looked too fast for Harry to be able to stay on. Maybe that purple and blue one? Or the large brown one?

Ron turned his head to look at Harry. "Well, it's up to us. Astrid said I could go with her...," he trailed off.

Harry laughed. "Come on, she's clearly taken."

"A guy can dream," Ron muttered.

Harry smiled and nodded. "Yeah," he agreed.

They lapsed into silence, both thinking about different things. Harry mulled over the events of the day, the second task finally over. He was so glad to have finally found something they could use to breathe underwater, combined with the relief of Hiccup giving him the cloth to protect himself against the dragon. All things considered, that one legged Viking had helped more than any of the teachers had. Come to think of it, they weren't really saying anything about the Tournament to him. All except Professor Moody, but he was strange in a whole other way. He had given Harry hints, but not ones that were helpful. More than anything, Harry was creeped out by the teacher.

Harry turned over in his bed, leaning on his stomach. He was pretty tired from the swimming event, but not as tired as he'd expected. He would have a big task the following day, trying to get a dance for the ball. He just wasn't sure he'd have the guts to actually ask someone to go with him. And he wasn't a dancer. What could he offer

when they were actually there? He hoped Hermione would have fun with her date. He would have asked her, to go as friends, but neither would have particularly enjoyed it. Ron would have had more fun with her, but he was too much of a chicken to actually ask his best friend.

### 13. Chapter 13

Hiccup and Toothless were sitting in the common room, adding notes to their makeshift Book of Dragons. It was still early morning, and most of the other Vikings were out enjoying the perfect flying conditions. Astrid and Ruffnut were hanging out with Hermione instead, getting ready for the Ball in the evening. Hiccup had opted for staying in, feeling as though he deserved a good rest.

It was just as well they'd decided to stay in, as Dumbledore and Professor Moody entered the dorm without even knocking. Hiccup glanced angrily at Toothless before shutting the book, placing his charcoal pen down, and turning to face Dumbledore.

"Where are the rest of your gang?" Dumbledore asked.

Hiccup shrugged, looking anywhere but at the head of the school. "Out and about," he answered vaguely.

Dumbledore appeared to grow angry, but contained it. Hiccup was glad, neither he nor Toothless were going to tolerate much more from any of these stupid wizards.

"Your group needs to be more careful around the students, the dragons are scaring them," Dumbledore warned.

Hiccup looked into the cold eyes of the old professor. "Not our problem," he said coldly.

"I don't think you understand â€“" he started, but Hiccup interrupted.

"No, you don't understand." His green eyes were hard, and he took a step forward. "You can't expect a bunch of dragons to stay cooped in a tower for long, especially when their riders are busy working with other dragons. Dragons are gonna do what they're gonna do, and you can't stop that."

Professor Moody frowned, his glass eye watching Toothless as he moved. "That may be so, but the students of the school don't need to be terrorised by the beasts."

Hiccup rolled his eyes and looked at Toothless for a moment. "If you hadn't noticed, we fly over the Black Lake and Forbidden Forest. We don't go near your precious students."

Dumbledore held up his hands. "We're getting side-tracked here," he intervened, changing the topic. Hiccup turned from Moody to Dumbledore, still frowning. Toothless behind him was showing teeth, proving to be quite the opposite of what his name suggested.

"In order to show the students there is no danger around your dragons, at the very least, Professor Moody will be teaching a lesson

on how to defend one's self against an attack," Dumbledore explained.

Hiccup nodded. "What does that have to do with me?" he asked, suspicious. He had an inkling on what the headmaster was saying, but he wasn't sure he wanted to believe him.

Moody looked at his watch before answering. "Tomorrow, throughout my classes, I would like you and your black beast, to demonstrate how to defend yourself."

Hiccup scowled. He hated when he was right. "Toothless wouldn't attack anyone anyway, why should he attend this class?"

Dumbledore's gaze turned firm. "The point is for students to learn there is nothing to be afraid of, and learning how to defend themselves against dragons isn't a bad idea," he said pointedly.

Hiccup stiffened, knowing exactly what the headmaster was referring to. The stupid treaty which stated that the Vikings would have to join forces with Voldemort if he requested it. None of the Vikings were impressed, not even the twins who were usually all for destruction and death.

"You want Toothless to attack the students?" Hiccup finally asked, trying to sound normal. His insides were seething, but he wasn't going to let the wizards know. He knew Toothless could tell, but he would be the only one.

Professor Moody nodded. "We'll be having our lessons in the courtyard tomorrow. The beast will just have to stand there whilst the students cast defensive spells. That way, they will believe they can survive a dragon attack."

Hiccup frowned, looking at Toothless worriedly. The dragon didn't look too pleased. "In other words, Toothless will be standing idly as wizard's blast him with numerous spells," he said, anger leaking into his voice. Toothless hissed angrily, not liking the idea.

"Correct. It's better to be safe than sorry," Moody said.

Hiccup stepped back into Toothless, placing a hand on his snout. He wasn't sure who needed the reassurance more, him or the dragon. He was pretty upset about the whole ordeal, his best friend would most likely be harmed because the wizards were conceited beings who were only concerned about themselves.

"What about the others?" Hiccup asked, referring to his friends.

Dumbledore cast a warning look towards Hiccup and Toothless. "They are not to help."

"Why not?"

The headmasters gaze got even more menacing, if that were possible. "You're the one who exposed his dragon to be dangerous. You will deal with this one yourself."

Both wizards turned to leave without another word. Hiccup was too busy fuming to say much else, so he supposed it was a good thing. He knew anything he said now, the wizards would use against him later. Toothless glared beside him, his teeth bared, as the headmaster and professor left the room.

Hiccup sighed angrily and leaned heavily against Toothless's wing. He nudged the boy lightly, trying to reassure him. Hiccup smiled and rubbed the dragon's head lightly, just enough to tell him he was alright.

"I thought this was going to be a good day," Hiccup mumbled. Toothless found it in himself to find the humour in his words. His eyes glinted knowingly, making Hiccup look away. "Fine, yeah, it had something to do with Astrid and the dance," he said, trying to settle the dragon. Instead, Toothless barked out a laugh. He pushed Hiccup off him, his eyes sparkling with amusement.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and smiled. "Sure, sure, it's hilarious," he muttered. Toothless just sat up straight and kept teasing his best friend; it was so easy to get under his skin.

The one legged Viking turned around, ignoring Toothless for a moment. When he looked back, determination was fixed on his face. "Come on, let's go out. If those wizards already think we're dangerous, we should be allowed to fly over the school during daylight."

Toothless gave him an are you serious look, but wasn't about to give up a chance to go flying. They walked towards the balcony together and Hiccup settled in the saddle. Hiccup felt Toothless's muscles tighten beneath him as the dragon spread his wings and launched himself into the air.

Hiccup smiled as they climbed into the sky, loving the feeling of the wind against his face.

"Come on, let's give them something to be afraid of."

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><p>Harry stared at the clock in the common room. He and Ron sat silently, contemplating their decisions. Somehow, they'd managed to ask two Gryffindor students to the dance, but neither were completely happy about it. Hermione wasn't around, briefly stating she was going out with Astrid and Ruffnut to prepare for the Ball.<p>

"How about a game of chess?" Ron said suddenly, standing up.

Harry nodded and followed him to the table near the window. They set up the game slowly, trying to drag out the time. They didn't really know what they should be doing with their day, but doing nothing was the only plan so far. Harry knew the Ball would also drag on forever since he wasn't sure how to act around his date. She seemed pretty ecstatic to have been asked by the champion, but Harry just wished he didn't have to attend.

Ron started the game of chess, moving one of the pawns. Harry sighed and followed quickly, knowing he'd lose the moment Ron gave him a smirk. Harry sighed and played to the best of his abilities, which wasn't very well, and lost quite horribly.

"Wow, I seriously thought you had me there," Ron said once he'd finally destroyed Harry's king.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Yeah, right. You always beat me."

Ron laughed and nodded. There was no denying the orange haired wizard was the better chess player. After all, he'd been the one to win the chess game when they'd gone hunting for the Philosopher's Stone. Mind, he sacrificed himself, but he still won.

They were distracted by the sound of a large explosion in the sky, making the two boys dash to the window to take a look. They arrived just in time to see a circle of blue light expanding through the clouds, before disappearing completely. Ron laughed and looked to Harry, who looked confused.

"What was that?" Harry asked, still staring at the clouds, where the blue light had vanished from. He couldn't see the source of the explosion, which lead him to believe it was some sort of spell. But who would cast one to the sky? It might have been fireworks, Harry thought.

"Hiccup," Ron said, nodding his head towards the sky. Just as he did, another explosion lit up the sky. This one was louder and closer to the tower. Harry watched a large fire ring move clouds around, before expanding in the same ring of light they'd seen previously.

Harry looked to Ron in disbelief. "How on earth is Hiccup producing that?" he asked, referring to the light show. Just as he'd spoken, another blast lit up the sky. Harry nearly flinched, the boom closer to them every time.

Ron laughed at his friend. "It's Toothless." As he said the name, the large frame of the black dragon came into view, shooting across the sky, wings outstretched and gliding. Harry noticed the red tail fin that belonged to the dragon, but he wasn't sure what it meant.

"That's one powerful dragon," Harry muttered in awe.

Ron nodded. "Yeah, he's pretty deadly. Vikings used to call the Night Fury the unholy offspring of Lightning and Death itself," he grinned.

Harry appeared surprised, unsure of how his friend knew these facts. He wanted to ask too, but he wasn't sure he'd like the answer. Luckily for him, Ron seemed to understand his confusion and answered without being asked.

"Hiccup told me before the first task, when you and I weren't talking, and when you weren't allowed to know the dragons were here." Ron watched the dragon shoot across the sky, getting closer to the tower with every strong beat of his wings. Harry noticed the small boy riding on his back, crouched forward and hands holding part of the saddle. Harry wondered how Hiccup managed to stay on, surely the dragon going so fast would knock him out of the saddle.

Harry saw the dragon shoot another blast, but this one was aimed directly at something. The room vibrated as the blast hit something

of the school. He looked up in time to see the mast of one of the school buildings falling down the side of the turret. Ron snickered as students below scrambled to get out of the flaming flags path.

"That dragon has the best aim, too. Never misses," Ron added. It was clear to Harry that Ron thought a lot of the dark dragon. Harry wasn't sure what to make of it: Toothless was pretty scary for his liking, but every time he saw Toothless with Hiccup, it made him think the dragon was no more than an overgrown cat. Harry was almost jealous of the relationship between boy and dragon, but he wouldn't mention that.

Harry watched as another blast tore another flag down from the turret of a building. Ron snickered. "He's going to get in trouble for that."

The pair watched out the window, the determined flight path of the deadly dragon. It seemed to have a motive behind its shots too, which didn't surprise Harry. The dragon wouldn't have been blowing up parts of the school for no reason. Harry was glad it was just the masts; they would be easy to live without and repair, depending on what the headmaster wanted.

A moment later, the path of the dragon was disturbed, as he pulled up suddenly. Harry noticed a second dragon added to the mix. This one was clearly the twins, with two heads and a green body. The blonde twins sat astride it, which confirmed Harry's suspicions.

The green dragon balanced out and blocked the black ones path. Toothless stayed in the air by beating his strong wings powerfully, but he was still cut off by the green one. The riders appeared to be having an argument, from what little Harry could see of their faces, and it was clear Hiccup wasn't happy.

Something changed in his resolve, as Hiccup and the twins turned the same way and combined their shots. The fire blast that hit the building shook the entire tower. Harry knew why instantly: Hiccup had been aiming for the flag on their own building. Ron laughed beside him, enjoying the show.

"The twins love their destruction," Ron stated. It was clear he was smug about something, maybe about knowing more than Harry about the dragons, but Harry didn't mind. He just wanted to learn as much as he could.

"It would be pretty awesome to fly up there with them," Harry said randomly. He was focused on the black dragon as it landed above them, apparently done for the time being. The green dragon went back to the Forbidden Forest, where it disappeared from sight. Harry got the distinct feeling the twins were hiding.

Ron nodded in agreement. "They did offer," he said.

Harry turned to his friend. "Are you going to take them up on it?" he asked.

Ron shrugged. "Maybe. It might be too scary for me to handle," he laughed as Harry grinned. He was right there. Harry probably wouldn't be able to go too high, or too fast. That would cancel out riding the

Night Fury, he thought.

They laughed and looked back out the window, at the smoking turrets that used to have masts. Harry laughed, earning a confused look from Ron. "Those Vikings are strange, but considering us wizards, they're not too bad," he explained.

Ron grinned. "Yeah, what must they think of us?" he asked, preparing to imitate the Vikings. He pulled out his wand and pretended to bend it in half. Harry laughed as he pretended to shoot a spell out the window.

"Yeah, well, we do come from opposite ends of the pecking order," Harry agreed.

Ron laughed. "No kidding. I don't even know if we should call them muggles." It was a serious problem when wizards didn't know the answer to something like this. They couldn't very well ask them, either. That would be insensitive on a number of levels.

Harry turned to look at the clock on the wall. It was just about lunch time, which meant they still had several hours before they could even begin to think about the ball. He was bored out of his mind, but he wasn't the only one. At least he had Ron, who was helpful and a good friend. They could always beat each other in chess again, or do some homework. Harry nearly cringed at the thought.

"We should just head to lunch early," Ron suggested, voicing Harry's thoughts. At least in the Hall they would be able to sit in a different environment, possibly be able to keep their minds off the impending embarrassment.

Harry agreed, and they left the common room. On their way down the stairs, they encountered a rather giddy Hiccup, who was looking extremely pleased with himself. Harry and Ron exchanged worried glances, before tapping Hiccup's shoulder gently. The young Viking jumped and turned, noticing the wizards for the first time.

"What's got you so happy?" Ron asked sceptically.

Hiccup shrugged. "Well, Dumbledore and Moody just had a crack at how dangerous Toothless was, so we showed him just how powerful he is," he explained. The grin on his face told Harry he wasn't sorry at all.

"By nearly blowing up the school?" Ron said pointedly, a hint of anxiety in his voice.

Hiccup faced forwards as they descended the stairs. "We wouldn't have blown up anything we didn't mean to. Besides, Toothless has the best aim out of anyone. I was more concerned when the twins joined." It didn't sound as though he was defending his actions, more justifying them, and proving to the two wizards that Hiccup wasn't in the wrong. Harry didn't want to believe that he could have been wrong anyway, Hiccup wouldn't have spontaneously decided to blow things up without a valid reason.

"Yeah, the twins seriously like their damage," Ron noted pleasantly. He obviously didn't care too much about the damage the twins had

caused, more of what Toothless had done. Ron was pretty nervous about a lot of things, and this was on the list.

The trio walked towards the great hall slowly, talking about random subjects. The Tournament and Hiccup's dragons didn't come up at all, rather they talked about the Ball and homework they each had. Harry was surprised to hear Hiccup also had some, but he wasn't about to ask what it was on.

They reached the Great Hall before most of the other students, taking their usual seats. Hiccup sat next to Harry, looking slightly aggravated. Harry watched the other boy's eyes meet the headmaster's, causing Hiccup to frown. The Viking had something strong against the professor, but Harry didn't understand what it was. The headmaster had always looked out for Harry, he didn't see why Dumbledore wouldn't do the same for the Vikings as well. All things considered, the Vikings deserved a medal for helping with the tournament as much as they had.

Harry talked to Ron across the other side of the table, as they waited for the room to slowly fill. Hiccup was lost in his own thoughts, Harry noticed, and decided it best not to disturb him.

Just before the meal opened, Hermione entered, along with the two Viking girls. She grinned and hopped onto the seat next to Harry. He grinned at her, and she waved her greetings to Ron. The three started to talk about their morning adventures, as food appeared on their plates.

"Did you see what happened on the roofs this morning?" Hermione asked randomly, looking at Harry and Ron. Harry had to guess she hadn't been able to see the dragons blowing up the school flags.

Ron snickered, his eyes darting to Hiccup. The one legged Viking watched Ron for a moment, gaining the attention of all the Vikings. "Yeah, Hiccup was trying to prove a point," he laughed as Astrid's face twisted with anger, Hiccup's own showed slight worry.

"Hiccup! What were you trying to prove this time?" Astrid asked loudly, clearly annoyed.

He hushed her, trying not to make a scene. "Just had a score to settle. Besides, it's not like we did any real damage."

Astrid glared at him. She clearly had a number of things she wanted to say to him, and he to her, but they were keeping it to themselves, for the sake of the wizards around them. Harry felt bad for Hiccup. With the little Viking looked so breakable, he didn't understand how Hiccup managed to make a living with the Vikings. He didn't understand their way of life, but Harry knew Hiccup was an abnormality, judging from the looks of the other Vikings gathered.

Half way through the meal, as Harry was talking with Hermione about their DADA homework, Hiccup stood and left the hall hurriedly. The Hall went silent as the metal leg clacked on the floor, making it known the Viking was leaving. Hiccup ignored the stares he got from everyone and left with a determined look on his face.

Harry turned to Astrid, who was looking just as confused as he was. That didn't ease his troubled mind, of course. Had he said something? Had the Vikings?

"What was that about?" Ron asked, voicing all their thoughts.

Astrid looked to the door, where she'd last seen Hiccup, before looking at Ron. "Have no idea. He's been acting pretty strange lately anyway." She explained. Harry felt a worry grow deep inside him, for the boy who'd helped him so much over such a short period of time.

"Maybe he and Toothless are fighting." Snotlout suggested. Astrid looked doubtful, but said nothing, as the twins were getting in first.

"Bags the Night Fury!" Tuffnut said quickly.

Ruffnut groaned in annoyance. Clearly, the Vikings were keen on getting their hands on the Night Fury, well, with the exception of Astrid and Fishlegs.

Fishlegs coughed, signalling he was about to say something. Eyes turned to him, and he paused, before announcing his thoughts. "I don't think that's it. He's still trying to figure out how to break the contract with the dark wizard."

Astrid nodded before shaking her head, which left Harry confused. "If that were it, he would have told us. It's something else."

Tuffnut opened his mouth, but was silenced by Fishlegs as he said strongly, "They're not fighting." The twins deflated, both looking pretty annoyed.

Astrid turned her eyes to the large table, and Harry noticed Gobber nodded. They seemed to be having a silent conversation, to which Harry couldn't understand.

The conversation split broke off when two people stood over the twins. Harry looked up to see Fred and George looking down at the Viking twins in amusement, their eyes sparkling with mischief. Ron pressed his palm to his face, looking away as a smile crept across his face. Hermione and Harry watched as the two Viking twins turned around, fully prepared to fight off the attacker.

"You guys should team up with us some day," Fred said, looking at Ruff and Tuff as they stood up.

Ruff grinned. "Yeah, combined we'd be able to take down the entire building," she exclaimed happily.

Harry saw Fishlegs and Astrid look completely annoyed, probably at how foolish they were being. The wizard twins, combined with the Viking twins, they would form a formidable team, one that would destroy everything in its wake. Maybe it wasn't such a bad ideaâ€¦

Ron noticed Harry's thoughtful face, before he looked to the two pairs of twins. His own brothers were grinning like crazy at Ron, obviously their heads were already filled with ideas. Ron swallowed

nervously and looked back to Harry.

"Can you start with the potions lab?" he asked.

George laughed. He turned to his twin, his eyes sparkling. "Nobody really likes that class anyway," he agreed. Ruff and Tuff both exchanged waked grins.

"We've got the best dragon for the job," they said in unison.

All four laughed as they high fived. Harry looked to Hermione, who was looking pretty sourly at the four twins. She was never in favour of destroying school property, she did somehow find a way to enjoy Professor Snape's potion class, even though he was highly against the muggleborn girl.

"Everyone's crazy today," Astrid muttered. Harry chuckled to himself, silently agreeing. The Vikings and wizards may have been completely different, but that didn't mean they weren't also similar.

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><p>Hiccup entered the tower room confidently, barely giving Toothless the hello he deserved as he walked to the table where his notes all sat. Toothless followed curiously behind, looking over his riders shoulder, as Hiccup pulled a blank sheet of paper out, as well as the sketch designs for Toothless's tail.</p>

Toothless waited patiently as Hiccup sat down on the floor, spreading out his drawings and sketches, matching pencils to each for notes. It was clear to Toothless that Hiccup was determined about something, he just wasn't sure what.

Hiccup started to sketch something on his paper, drawing lines out as he added another detail. He hummed as he worked, focused entirely on the work. He was annoyed as well, but he was doing this for the safety of his best friend.

After some time, Hiccup had managed to combine several of his sketches to form a final design for a new tail for the dragon. He held it up to the dragon. Toothless stared at it in confusion, unable to read the runes that sprouted from lines pointing to the tail fin. Hiccup smiled and explained.

"It's a new tail, it'll allow you to fly without my having to be with you," he said, watching as the dragon spat at the idea. Hiccup put the paper down and sighed, walking closer to the dragon. He held the dragon's head in his arms, looking into his green eyes.

"This way, tomorrow you can escape, and not be injured by the spells." At least his dragon would be safe, Hiccup thought. He couldn't bear the thought of anything happening to him. Just as Toothless cared for Hiccup, he too cared for the dragon. They both knew they would die for each other, but they also knew they couldn't live without the other. Complications, right?

Toothless gave Hiccup a look, one which told him he wasn't about to leave Hiccup on his own with the wizards. Hiccup chuckled and shook his head. "You wouldn't be leaving me, anyway. I won't be surprised if they try they're defensive spells on me too, and I know you

won't be having that."

The dragon snorted fiercely, as if saying, \_darn right I won't\_. Hiccup laughed and nodded. "See? I'm not keen on hanging out with the wizards any more than you are."

Toothless looked at the design again, this time with a happier outlook. Hiccup grinned and picked it back up, rolling it into a scroll which was easier to carry. He tucked it under his arm and walked to the door. "Come on, we've got work to do."

The dragon followed carefully behind his one legged rider, as they descended the tower slowly. Hiccup knew the only place he would be able to get the materials he needed for the new tail was on the boat, where he'd stored several for the trip. Of course, travelling with a blacksmith also had its perks, as Gobber had brought his own supplies, to which Hiccup would add to his own.

As they made their way through the courtyard, they passed a rather unfriendly face. Of course, Malfoy couldn't just walk past Hiccup, he had to make a scene. Hiccup frowned as he stopped in the open courtyard, facing Malfoy and his two friends. The young wizard hadn't seemed to notice the black dragon looming behind Hiccup, watching in the shadows. He was clearly ready for the pounce if Malfoy threatened his precious rider.

"All alone today, Hiccup?" the white haired wizard sneered. His goons snickered behind him, enjoying the ridicule of the one legged boy.

Hiccup sighed, trying to pretend Toothless wasn't there. "What's it to you?" he asked, keeping his voice low. He didn't want to start a scene around the wizards that would cause more trouble than it was worth, and it wasn't worth much.

Malfoy laughed, a smirk on his pale face. "Oh, nothing. Just amazed you're still alive."

Hiccup frowned, wondering what the boy was getting at. "Why wouldn't I be?" he said exasperatedly.

"Just hoping that black beast of yours had finished you off," Malfoy replied with a shrug. Hiccup heard a low grumble in the background and knew instantly who it was, but Malfoy didn't look like he had heard it at all.

"For your information, however deadly he may be, that dragon would never hurt me," Hiccup said, standing taller. He was lopsided, because of his metal leg, but he needed to defend his best friend. He wasn't about to stand there and have Toothless dissed because of how he acted around him. Toothless was stronger than anyone gave him credit for, and Hiccup was about to make everyone know it.

Malfoy snickered. He looked down at Hiccup's metal leg and a sneer formed on his nasty face. Hiccup frowned as he looked at Malfoy, knowing another crack was coming. Couldn't the blond wizard just \_leave him alone\_?

"I'm Hiccup," Malfoy started, his voice rising in an imitation, causing the real Viking to frown. "I'm the leader of the Vikings and

all dragons are my friends. My leg fell off and I'm as weak as I look." He started to laugh as he finished his imitation, his goons following. Hiccup scowled and turned away, looking for Toothless.

"I don't sound like that." Hiccup said, his voice firm and strong. He was getting pretty fed up with the school in general, he wasn't about to pretend to be enjoying this anymore. It didn't help that Malfoy was taking swings at everything he could find.

"By the way, my leg didn't fall off," Hiccup stated. He felt something stand behind him, and judging by the looks on Malfoy and his friend's faces, it was his dragon. Hiccup turned slightly, letting Toothless stand next to him rather than behind.

Hiccup sighed, knowing the fight was over for now. "Look, we've got something to take care of. We'll see you later." He put extra emphasis on the we, letting Malfoy know if he wanted Hiccup, he was going to have to deal with the dragon too. It was a package deal.

Toothless glared at Malfoy a moment after Hiccup had already started walking off, before he followed his friend. Hiccup grinned and ran away from the dragon playfully, leaving the dragon walking in a confused manner. Hiccup laughed and beckoned for him to follow. It took a moment for Toothless to understand their game, before the dragon's eyes sparkled in competition.

Hiccup ran out of the courtyard and onto the open grass fields. He ran down the hill, closely followed by the dragon. He sped up, careful as he placed his metal leg on the rough grass surface, and headed for the Black Lake where their boat was docked.

Toothless was keeping a steady pace behind his rider, until they were several strides from the water. He jumped into the air, his wings keeping him up, as he landed in front of Hiccup. Toothless trapped the boy within a circle of his own body, before pushing him to the ground and landing on top of him.

Hiccup laughed as he breathed out quickly, the adrenaline of the chase wearing off, and his breaths short. Toothless barked out a laugh as he hopped off the young rider and stood back, allowing Hiccup to catch his breath.

It took a moment, but as he stood up, Hiccup was better. He smiled and hugged Toothless, wrapping his arms as far around the dragon's body as he could. Toothless pressed his head gently against Hiccup's back, embracing the boy, before he pushed him off him entirely.

Hiccup laughed and looked to the water, leaning back on his heel. Toothless warbled lowly and waited for his Viking to make the first move. Eventually Hiccup took a step towards the docks and headed towards the boat. Toothless followed carefully, not wanting to accidentally break the wooden pier. Hiccup thought it was amusing how careful the dangerous dragon was being.

"It's alright, it's not the docks at home. I don't really care if you blow these up," Hiccup teased gently. Toothless glared at Hiccup for a moment, before relaxing and casually following behind the boy. Hiccup laughed as he boarded the ship from the plank and started to

rummage through their boxes of things.

Toothless watched in amazement at the amount of materials the small boy was able to find, including metal rods, hammer, leather, gears, and other bits and pieces Hiccup had on the design sheet. He worked away, looking for everything he needed, so he wouldn't have to come back to the ship.

Hiccup gathered everything in a pile in the centre of the boat, then opened the parchment. He nodded as he checked everything off on the list, then looked to Toothless with a knowing smile. Toothless grumbled and walked towards him, not really upset, but he was almost annoyed.

"Don't worry, it's better than me having to carry all this back," Hiccup laughed. Toothless nodded in agreement. They both knew if Hiccup were to carry all the materials in one go, he would likely fall over with the weight almost doubling his own.

Hiccup loaded the dragon up and attached the bits and pieces to his saddle. "Right, let's get this done before the Ball. I would like to spend some time dancing with Astrid," he said happily. Toothless laughed at his side, as they headed towards their dorm. Hiccup rolled his eyes at his best friend, who was clearly teasing him about his newfound romance.

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><p>Harry and Ron were ready and waiting at the foot of the stairs, near the Great Hall. Ron was wearing a pretty ridiculous outfit, red and white with frills. Harry wore a black set of robes, which made him look quite fancy. They were waiting on their dates, Parvati and Padma Patil. While Ron felt uncomfortable in the robes, Harry felt uncomfortable at the idea of having to dance in front of everyone.</p>

There was a movement at the top of the stairs, and Harry and Ron looked up to see Hiccup fiddling with the white collar of his shirt. The wizards looked on in amazement at the scrawny Vikings appearance. What once was scraggly, old clothes, the young boy now had a long sleeved white shirt, black over jacket and black robe. He wore black pants and one black polished shoe. If nobody knew better, you couldn't tell he had a metal leg at all, the way his long black pants covered his leg. Hiccup shifted uncomfortably as he descended the stairs, stopping with Harry and Ron.

"Wow, Hiccup. Where'd the robes come from?" Ron asked curiously. All Harry could do was stare, not wanting to say anything stupid. He himself was wondering where the outfit had come from. Vikings didn't seem like the type of people who would wear this kind of thing on a regular basis.

Hiccup shrugged as he looked over his getup. "McGonagall gave 'em to us, something about being asked by Hermione." He seemed just as confused as Harry and Ron, which made it alright.

Ron laughed after a moment. "Hermione must have asked 'cause poor Astrid would have had a pretty dishevelled date otherwise," he teased.

Hiccup scoffed. "Please, I'll have you know I have nice clothes too." He put his hands across his chest and frowned to Ron. Harry smiled at their banter, before his gaze turned sharply upwards at a movement. He was surprised to see Hermione and Astrid standing at the top of the stairs, both in beautiful gowns.

Harry looked to Hiccup briefly, seeing his awestruck face staring intently at Astrid. Astrid was beautiful, a long straight blue dress with a tie around the middle, low neck and short shoulders. She was quite the sight with her hair done elegantly, left down apart from her fringe which was plaited and tied together at the back, a white rose in the middle to hide the tie. She had a brushing of silvery makeup across her eyes, making the blue in them strikingly vibrant.

From Astrid, Harry looked to Hermione with a small smile. Ron couldn't seem to stop staring at their best friend, which made Harry laugh inside. She had on a gentle periwinkle-blue dress which went to the floor in smooth ruffles. Lighter material crossed her shoulders and created a small bow across her chest. Her hair was up in a bun, a smooth curl hanging down past her shoulders. She was stunning.

Harry watched the two girls descend the stairs slowly, trying to be careful in the shoes they were in. It was clear to Harry that Astrid had never been in shoes with heels as the ones she had on, which made it all the more impressive at how quickly she was picking it up.

Someone walked beside Harry and stood there, watching Hermione. Harry turned carefully and noticed it was Viktor Krum. Harry smiled internally, his prediction had been correct. The famous Quidditch player harvested feelings for his best friend, which explained the second task a bit more now.

Krum winked to Hiccup as he walked up to Hermione and kiss her hand gently. She blushed and walked with him into the ballroom, nodding to Harry and Ron. She gave Hiccup the universal go for it sign and kept up with her date.

Hiccup smiled as Hermione left, then turned his attention onto his own date. Astrid reached the bottom of the steps and smiled as she took in her partner's neat appearance. She looked surprised when she saw he was covering up the false leg, but chose not to bring it up.

Hiccup reached for her hand, but Astrid quickly put a stop to it. "Don't even think about it." She managed a small glare, which had Hiccup holding his hands in surrender.

"Wasn't going to," he said defensively, a smile on his lips. It was clear to Harry he was smitten with her, and her beautiful dress wasn't helping him reign in his usual gawking.

Harry looked to Ron, who smiled. They waited for a moment, Hiccup and Astrid already entering the ballroom. The sound of giggling alerted them to their own dates, who were walking towards them quickly. Parvati was wearing dress robes that were a shocking pink, whilst Padma wore dress robes that were a bright shade of turquoise. They both looked beautiful, all done up. Harry felt bad for the girls, knowing him and Ron wouldn't be very good dance partners.

Parvati stood in front of Harry as he greeted her cheerfully. She smiled and allowed Harry to take her hand and lead her into the ballroom.

The moment they were inside, heads turned to them. They were the last of the champions to arrive inside the hall, so the first dance was to begin. Harry lined up behind Cedric and Cho, with Hermione and Krum in front of them. The music started playing, and Harry took a brief look at Cho, who was looking breathtaking as usual. He felt a brief moment of wishing, where he wished he was with Cho rather than Parvati but that thought vanished quickly when Parvati pulled him onto the dance floor and started to lead the dance.

Harry was quick to pull the dance back into his own game, leading the girl instead. Parvati smiled at the crowd, clearly showing off the fact that she was with the champion and they weren't. Harry felt pretty annoyed at that, but he wasn't about to say anything. He wasn't going to dance again, either, so he figure he would let her have the glory for the moment.

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><p>The first dance ended and Hiccup smiled as he gently pulled Astrid towards the dance floor. She blushed gently as he twirled her around as the next song started. It was slow and pleasant to dance to, even for Hiccup. Astrid followed Hiccup's lead happily, looking deep into his green eyes.</p>

Hiccup held Astrid delicately as she twirled under his arm. It was almost awkward for him, considering he was the same height as her, but they made it work. Astrid leant into Hiccup, placing her head on his chest. He blushed as she stayed there, swaying to the beat to keep them moving. He felt eyes on him, but he chose to ignore them.

Glancing around, he saw his friends sitting at the food table, happily stuffing their faces. Snotlout was watching with envy, clearly jealous of Hiccup with Astrid. Hiccup smiled internally, he'd never been able to make his cousin jealous before; \_he'd\_ always been jealous of his cousin, if anything.

Hiccup saw Hermione and Viktor Krum twirling on the floor as well. Krum appeared rough and hard, but Hiccup saw the slight blush on Hermione's cheek as she leaned in to him on her own. Hiccup thought it was cute to see her behave that way, different to how she was around her two wizard friends.

"Where'd you disappear off to earlier?" Astrid asked quietly, still leaning in to Hiccup's chest. It was obvious to him she didn't want to say it loudly, for everyone to hear.

Hiccup shrugged gently as he turned around, heading off the dance floor. Astrid followed and sat beside him at a chair. Turning his head carefully, to see who was around him and in hearing range, he just saw Harry and Ron sitting by themselves watching the dance. Hiccup wondered briefly where their dates had gone, but he realised he didn't really care.

"I had to sort something out. Besides, nothing interesting happens

here, so I didn't miss much," he replied to her earlier question. Astrid smiled slightly in agreement, watching people on the dance floor. Hiccup wasn't sure if she wished she was still out there, or if she was one of those girls who'd always dreamed of going to a dance with a guy and having a sweet slow dance.

Astrid leant into Hiccup. "I really want to go home," she muttered into his chest.

Hiccup nodded in agreement. He rested his hand against her head and smiled. This was one of the moments he lived for, the moments where he could love Astrid, and she'd return his feelings. There weren't any complications, no dragons or Vikings alike who would judge them, just him and her.

"I want to too. And I know Toothless does," he said sadly.

Astrid frowned. Hiccup worried for a moment, thinking it was because he'd mentioned Toothless, before she calmed his thoughts. "These stupid wizards just think they can make us do whatever they want. They think this is our true nature, to be bending to their every whim. They're in for a shock soon," she muttered darkly.

Hiccup nodded firmly. "Yeah, you and Snotlout'll shock the school. I hope it's soon, I really don't want to be here anymore. I just want to be home, where we can fly, train our dragons, be in peace."

The girl agreed wholeheartedly. She looked into Hiccup's green eyes with her blue ones, as she stood up. Hiccup chuckled as he was pulled onto the dance floor, Astrid taking the lead as she always did.

Others may have thought Hiccup, being the male, was in charge, but Astrid was the stronger one. She was the one whose emotions weren't all over the place, the post where Hiccup was the flag. Neither minded the change in roles, they were used to it. With all of Hiccup's upbringing and constant negativity towards him, it wasn't a surprise that the girl was stronger. She had always been strong, and her strength was one of the things Hiccup was drawn to.

"As soon as Fishlegs finds a way for us to break this deal with that wizard, we're out of here," Astrid stated firmly. If she was standing in front of Dumbledore, he wouldn't have argued with her tone. Well, Hiccup thought bitterly, he probably would.

Hiccup nodded. "I hope that's soon," he mumbled as they twirled around on the dance floor. It wasn't long before there were only a few pairs left: him and Astrid, Hermione and Krum, Ron's little sister and Neville who'd given Harry the underwater plant, and three others.

The two danced until no one was dancing anymore, and the stage cleared. They stopped and smiled at each other, satisfied with the evening. Hiccup had been able to take his mind off every little thing about the school and enjoy, for the first time in a long while, his time with his crush. He was happy enough to go without another evening like this for a while.

Hiccup bowed to Astrid as they stopped dancing, and she curtseyed. They laughed at each other, heading out the door. Their previous

emotions skipping them and they returned to the friends they usually were, still liking each other, but not sappy.

They exited the great hall, and weren't surprised to see two looming figures waiting for them. Hiccup chuckled as the two dragons bounded over to them and made sure they were still alright. Hiccup exchanged grins with Astrid before he beckoned Toothless over. Stormfly pecked at Astrid happily and the two walked ahead of Toothless and Hiccup to the tower.

On their way, they passed a large corridor with an open window large enough to fit both dragons through comfortably. Hiccup looked to Astrid mischievously.

"Where'd you get that dress from by the way?" he asked curiously, a smug smirk on his face.

She grinned and hopped over to the window, Stormfly in tow. "One of the Gryffindor's said I could borrow it, said it was a spare. Hermione asked of course."

Hiccup chuckled. "Well, you look beautiful. But I bet a nice flight will make it look more natural." He had to admit, the clothes he was wearing were starting to itch, and he was itching to get into the air. He hadn't finished the new tail yet, but he had time before lessons began in the morning to get it finished. Besides, it wasn't the worst thing in the world if he was late.

Astrid nodded and grinned. "Why thank you, kind sir." She jumped up onto her dragon's saddle and beamed down at Hiccup. The dress hitched up as she put her legs on either side of the saddle. Stormfly squawked to Hiccup, telling him to mount his own dragon so they could get a move on.

Hiccup laughed and hopped onto his own saddle. Toothless snorted as he leapt into the air, the Nadder following closely behind. They shot into the sky, a race in their minds. Obviously, Hiccup won, but that didn't mean Astrid didn't try and Hiccup didn't give her the chance.

Somewhere along the way, the rose in Astrid's hair dropped to the ground, but neither notice. They were too busy ignoring the wizard's itchy lifestyle and enjoying the freedom of their own.

#### 14. Chapter 14

\*\*Hey guys. So it's been a while, I know. This is the unedited version, my editor is on a small break, but I know she's going to be back on her feet in no time! If anyone notices how bad the grammar is, that's because my editor is amazing and you guys should all seriously shout out to her in the comments. She has had no thanks, and she really deserves it. Her name's Riya, for those of you who want to! Thanks, it would make her day.\*\*

They were sitting at the large Gryffindor table for breakfast on Monday morning, the Vikings communicating with their new friends, when Fishlegs entered the great hall with an ecstatic grin on his face. Hiccup watched as his large friend took a seat beside Astrid, a piece of parchment in his hands. For the first time ever, Hiccup

imagined, the larger Viking ignored food, pushing his plate away, replacing it with a parchment which looked ancient.

"I know how to get out of this deal now." He exclaimed happily, rolling the parchment open, revealing a complicated selection of ancient runes. They had clearly been written specifically for the Vikings, the wizards wouldn't have written anything like this.

Hiccup reached across the table, pulling the parchment closer. He recognised the runes immediately, having familiarised himself with many types when he was younger and the shame of the Viking community. The runes were smudged, but still readable. Hiccup surprised himself at the signature at the bottom, having seen it once before on a darker agreement.

"Written by Chief Haddock." Hiccup murmured, scanning the signature and running his hand gently over it.

Astrid looked to Hiccup in surprise. "You can read this?" she asked. Clearly, she'd been more focussed on fighting dragons when she was younger, to have learnt the ancient runes the Vikings would use to communicate with. They were now extinct, which made it safer if the Vikings didn't want another tribe to read their work and discover their secrets.

Hiccup glanced to Fishlegs, who beamed at him. "Yeah, did a lot of learning in my free time." Hiccup explained. When he was younger, he'd wanted to become a better Viking, so he learnt the ancient communication ways, became a blacksmiths' apprentice, and read the book of dragons. At the same time, he designed his own weapons. He had a lot of free time on his hands.

"It's great! Hiccup, Chief Haddock didn't mean for the Vikings to kill permanently, he left the future generations an out." He explained happily. Hiccup scanned the document carefully, noting Fishlegs was indeed correct in his assumptions, not that he doubted it.

Astrid looked over Hiccup's shoulder to the work on the table. She was confused, not able to understand it. "What does it say?" she asked.

Hiccup read it out slowly. "Chief Haddock never would have signed it if he were given the choice. Then he says he made sure the deal left them an out, so the future generations wouldn't have to follow his rules. Clearly, Haddock didn't want to agree with the dark wizard. It also mentions that if we were ever to gain peace with the dragons, we weren't to tell the dark wizards. Like we would anyway." Hiccup added.

Astrid nodded in agreement. "What's the out? How are we supposed to break the contract?" she asked anxiously.

Hiccup sighed, noticing the rushed scribbles of the runes at the end. "Well, we've got to disconnect from the wizards." He looked up, briefly noticing Dumbledore's eyes on his own, before looking to Fishlegs. "How would we do that?" he asked the nerdy Viking.

Fishlegs looked down. "Well, I would assume it meant to never come into contact with them, but I don't know. There wasn't anything that mentioned it." He mumbled. Hiccup understood what he meant.

Hiccup sighed, looking around his large group of friends. He'd earned the attention of the trio of wizards as well, all eyes on him and Fishlegs. They all knew what this meant, they had a lead and they would be able to escape the wizard world without killing them. They just had to figure out how they would be able to disconnect completely from the strange world, as the chief had ordered.

"Good work, Legs. We'll keep looking." Hiccup said, handing the parchment back to his large friend.

Fishlegs nodded and tucked the parchment away, hiding it under his layers of clothing. Hiccup sighed, feeling relieved for the first time in ages. He picked up his toast and brought it to his mouth, thinking about going back home. For the first time in yonks, Hiccup felt as though they'd be able to go home soon, they wouldn't have to stay there much more. They could leave the stupid wizards in their tracks and go back to their simpleton life they all enjoyed.

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><p>Harry prepared himself for the long day of classes, a feeling of relief washing over him. He and his two friends were all quite pleased to hear the Vikings wouldn't have to fight against them, as well they would be able to go home. Much as Harry liked to have Hiccup around and talk to him, he knew Hiccup just wanted to go back to his old way of life.</p>

The trio walked towards their first class, transfiguration, and sat in silence at a bench. Each one of them were contemplating what would happen, and how things would pan out their end. At least they didn't have to worry about the third task, it was still months away. He was glad, it would give him time to prepare and do his studies for once.

"Do you think they'll be able to find the loop hole soon?" Ron asked quietly, not wanting the Slytherins in the room to hear their conversation.

Hermione leaned across Harry, who sat in the middle, and whispered, "I hope so. Beside, we can help them too."

Harry smiled slightly, thinking of the strange writing he'd seen on the parchment earlier at breakfast. It surprised him when not even Astrid could read the writing, but the small one legged and larger blond Viking could. "I don't know how much help we'd be." He pointed out.

Hermione pouted. "I wish I was taking ancient runes." She mumbled, more to herself.

Harry chuckled and nodded. "That would be helpful. But you've got a pretty full schedule." He noted.

She grinned. "Not getting another time turner."

Harry shivered at the memories. Ron still didn't know about their

adventures, but he did know the gist of what happened. "Probably a good idea." Harry agreed.

The class quietened as the professor walked in, clearly ready to start the lesson. Harry pulled out his writing gear and prepared himself for the tasks ahead.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup had to ditch his friends on request of the headmaster and professor. Toothless was grumpy himself, having a new contraption on his tail. He was running late to the class, having taken a longer time than necessary to get the new gear on the dragon. Toothless didn't want to be able to fly without Hiccup, not trusting his own lethal abilities. Hiccup thought it was almost endearing, but his best friend was being overly dramatic at the same time.</p>

They walked towards the courtyard, where they had been instructed to meet the slime ball of a teacher. Hiccup could feel a string of rather unpleasant names for the two teachers, but in the company of the dragon, he wasn't sure it was a good idea. Toothless might be liable to take them literally, and then they were really in danger. Well, Hiccup wasn't, the professors were.

As they rounded the last corner before the corridor, Hiccup nearly ran into the headmaster. Dumbledore looked about ready to apologise, but he noticed it was Hiccup and his gaze stiffened. Hiccup felt the same and Toothless bared his teeth in warning.

"Morning Hiccup." The professor said lightly. Hiccup gave him a quizzical glance, before the old wizard sighed, as though formalities were wasted on the young Viking. Well, Hiccup thought bitterly, they kinda were.

"What was on that paper Fishlegs shared with you this morning?" Dumbledore asked. It was the kind of voice which told Hiccup he wasn't about to get out of the conversation, but that didn't mean he wasn't about to try.

"None of your business." Hiccup said bitterly, his eyes hard and firm. He wasn't about to have this conversation, he couldn't be bothered. Of course, the head master just had to go and finish it.

"You made it my business when you involved my students."

"No, you involved your students, by bringing us here. We had no clue about the stupid contract until you brought it up. It's your fault it's still in effect." Hiccup exclaimed, losing his cool. He waved his hands angrily in the air, gesturing to nowhere in particular. Dumbledore still didn't seem to get the big picture, which made Hiccup even angrier.

Dumbledore didn't seem to get that Hiccup was losing his cool however. "We only did so we could end the ties once and for all, so no more trouble could come to my students."

Hiccup laughed bitterly, his eyes getting crazy. "I'm beginning to think we should work with this dark wizard, so we might be rid of you." He snapped. Toothless was wary of his rider, knowing he was

on a short tether which would snap momentarily.

This seemed to catch Dumbledore's attention, for all the wrong reasons too, Hiccup knew. "We were right to be wary of you. No matter how you seem, you're still all Vikings."

Hiccup looked at Toothless, his eyes growing with hatred. He couldn't believe this guy had actually gotten the position of headmaster, let alone gotten his students to like him. It was an act, clearly. Hiccup was sure they were getting the special treatment.

"And Vikings take care of our own, which is more than I can say for you." Hiccup said, walking off. He could feel Dumbledore about to say something else, but Hiccup ignored him. He walked off, Toothless glaring at the professor, to the courtyard to meet Professor Moody. Neither of them were happy, both fuming at the seams, and about to tear something apart, but they had agreed, and Vikings don't go back on their word.

They were still fuming by the time they entered the courtyard, receiving stares from everyone in the class. The mechanical eye of Professor Moody stared them down, just as his body turned. Hiccup breathed a deep sigh, turning to Toothless and trying to calm down. The dragon seemed to understand, for he moved closer and allowed the one legged boy to lean on him.

Hiccup gave the dragon a scratch under the chin, effectively calming them both down at his reaction. Hiccup chuckled and stood up straight, ready to face the next idiot teacher. They weren't to wait long, either, for Moody walked towards them, his mechanical eye switching from the dragon to the students, who were watching the exchange anxiously.

"You're late." Moody said stoutly.

Hiccup shrugged. "Ran into a wall." Which could happen, he thought sarcastically. He wasn't the best at looking where he was going sometimes, and in the old castle they were trapped in, it was easier to lose their way.

Moody seemed to contemplate this for a moment, before he pulled Hiccup by the scruff of his shirt, towards the centre of the courtyard. Hiccup held his hand for Toothless to stay where he was, whilst he was dragged to the front of the students.

All eyes were on Hiccup, the small Viking who couldn't pass for much and had somehow managed to survive a battle with a large black beast. Hiccup knew they weren't his age, much older in fact, possibly in their last year of schooling. He didn't recognise any of them. They weren't wearing the colours Hiccup had grown used to either, which told him they weren't Gryffindor or slytherin.

Moody released Hiccup at the front, standing beside him. His mechanical eye watched Hiccup, a clear glare in it, as he spoke to the students. "With the recent events, it has become necessary for students to learn how to defend themselves against the dragons. We will be demonstrating on the black beast which Hiccup here so kindly allowed us access too."

\_He's \_not\_ putting words in my mouth\_, Hiccup thought sarcastically.

He was about to speak up, when Moody's hand hit him roughly in the side to shut him up. He grit his teeth and looked to Toothless, who had watched the exchange and was seething.

A murmur went around the class, as students exchanged worried glances. Hiccup would have felt relieved at this, but he knew if they were nervous, their spells would be twice as effective. That was what he was worried about. The only thing which made it better was his knowledge that Toothless would be able to fly away if he needed to. At least that made him feel even slightly happier.

Moody looked to Hiccup expectantly. The boy faked innocence, having no idea what he was trying to imply. The professor was growing agitated at Hiccup's behaviour. "The dragon, boy. We're running out of time." He instructed coolly.

\_Good\_, Hiccup thought angrily. He nodded his head, which seemed odd to all the students, for they assumed he was nodding at no one, before a large shadow loomed behind Hiccup and created a strong gust of wind. Hiccup smiled internally at the shocked and nervous reactions the dragon held on the students.

Toothless stood carefully behind Hiccup, his wings flared and tail moving side to side in precise movements. The professor sighed angrily, fed up with the lack of consideration Hiccup had for the students. Hiccup sent him a challenging look, he was beyond angry with the way the wizards were acting towards them, and he wasn't about to start with this one.

"It's alright, class. This dragon won't hurt anyone here. We'll practise the \_stupefy\_ spell first. Line up please." Moody yelled curtly.

Instantly, the class formed a straight line. The student at the front, black and yellow robes with the symbol of a honey badger, stood there shakily as he held his wand in front of him. Hiccup stood to the side, not wanting to be hit with the spells. Toothless gaged the boy carefully, before jumping out of the way the moment the spell was cast. Hiccup breathed a sigh of relief, the dragon looking to him for a moment before training his cautious green eyes on the students.

Class continued, no student laying a single spell on the black dragon. Toothless seemed to be enjoying himself, pretending it was hard to avoid the slow moving spells. Hiccup knew the dragon was moving slowly for the benefit of the students, who had each thought they were '\_this close\_'. Hiccup snorted, the dragon could move at the speed of sound, so this wasn't hard at all.

The class ended, and Hiccup could see the professor fuming on the other side of the courtyard. Hiccup called Toothless over, who was more than happy to oblige. He grinned and attacked his best friend, which in turn knocked himself to the ground. Hiccup laughed and batted away the oncoming storm of paws trying to playfully grab at his face.

A cough interrupted their playful act, and Hiccup turned icy at the cold glare he was receiving from Professor Alistair Moody. Hiccup stayed on the ground, not caring about how undignified it looked, whilst Toothless let a low grumble escape, his chest vibrating above

Hiccup as he stood carefully over his best friend.

"That was not good enough. Get your dragon under control." Moody snapped, however still wary of the fiery dragon.

Hiccup grumbled to himself. Why did these things always happen to him? He should have told Astrid, she would have been able to help him. Instead, he'd said he would be busy taking a long flight away from the castle, whilst they hung out with the dragons in the common room. He would have gathered to be there with them, then this nightmare.

"He's a dragon, it's not my fault he's following his nature." Hiccup snorted, watching the near black but blue beast above him. Toothless looked to Hiccup proudly for a moment, before returning his protective stance over his rider.

Moody stepped forwards, rewarded by a loud growl which ripped through the entire courtyard, and made the professor stand still in his tracks. Students who had gathered for the class also stopped, afraid of the deadly beast before them.

"The way I see it, you owe us. You're going to work with Voldemort, and the wizards need to defend themselves against the dragons." He said. So that's what he planned. Well, he didn't need to bring that up. Hiccup rolled over onto his stomach, watching Moody with a calculating expression.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "If that's what your worried about, you'll be sorely disappointed." He wasn't going to tell this wizard he'd found a loop whole, but he was pretty proud of it. And Moody had always seemed to act as though he wanted the Vikings to help with the dark wizard, for some odd reason. Why would someone as known as him for defeating dark wizards, want Hiccup and the Vikings to help the dark ones?

This seemed to stun Moody for a moment. Something clicked in his mind, clogs turning. "How are you going to get out of it then?" he asked, obviously curious.

Hiccup looked at Toothless, who growled at the professor. "We're not telling you." He'd told Toothless, of course. Something as big as the news they'd heard earlier wasn't something he was about to keep from his best friend. It was something the dragon needed to know, too, as it affected him more than Hiccup.

Moody gave Hiccup a small side glance, before he returned to his bench and waited for his next class. Hiccup rolled his eyes and moved with Toothless towards the edge of the courtyard, where he sat down on the railings and rested a hand on the scaly dragon.

As the next class filled, Hiccup knew by the excited looks on the young faces of the students, they were looking forwards to seeing a dragon. The small thought gave Hiccup the hope that these students wouldn't be too harsh on his best friend. By the looks of them, they were either first or second years, ravenclaw or gryfindor. There was something to be said about the two houses, neither were very happy to see each other. Hiccup wondered why all the houses disliked each other, as though it was some sort of built in hatred which came with the house.

Toothless watched with annoyed eyes as their class began. Moody was speaking in a low voice, to which Hiccup wasn't able to hear from the distance he was. When the professor turned to meet Hiccup's eyes, he nodded and Hiccup sighed. Toothless growled to himself as he stalked into view, already formulating a plan of defence. Smart dragon.

\* \* \*

><p>Lunch was a loud event, many students whispering about their defence against the dark arts class. Harry looked around the great hall, surprised by the sheer number of people who were all looking rather ecstatic. He saw the Slithering forming the nastiest glare towards Hiccup, but most others were giving him a look of awe. It was clear to him he'd done something impressive during their class.</p>

Hermione looked up from her meal as she noticed Harry's distracted looks. She smiled as she said, "Guess we're about to find out, we've got it last." She said.

Harry and Ron grinned. "Well, I'm sure it'll be fun. Hopefully nothing like the curse lesson we had before." A shiver ran down Harry's back as he remembered the way the bug had shrivelled up in pain, contorted before being killed instantly by another spell.

The trio all cringed as they went back to their food, trying to ignore the buzzing around the room. They would surely find out what the mystery excitement was about, they had defence next. It was their last class for the day, and unfortunately, with the slytherins.

As the clatter and excitement died down, Harry decided they should get to their class. Ron and Hermione were quick to agree. They left their plates and headed out of the great hall, mixing into the numerous other students who were all having the same idea. They wanted to get to class early too, mostly the ravenclaws.

The group went to the courtyard, where they'd been instructed to go for their lesson. It seemed like an odd place for a class, but none of the students wanted to question their slightly crazed professor. Harry sat down at a bench and waited for Ron and Hermione to follow suit.

Unfortunately for them, they weren't the only ones there. Malfoy and his two goons were already waiting, and had spotted the Gryffindor trio with smirks. Malfoy headed over to Harry, his face a mixture of smug and nastiness, not unusual for the pale slytherin boy.

Harry immediately stood up, not wanting to disadvantage himself against the slytherins. Hermione and Ron flanked him carefully, watching Malfoy with hawk like eyes.

"Interesting set up for a class, isn't it? I heard we're here to fight dragons." Malfoy snickered.

Harry exchanged looks with Ron and Hermione, who both gave him the same blank look. "Why would we be doing that? There aren't any dragons here anyway." Aside Toothless and all the Vikings other dragons, Harry thought to himself. Maybe Malfoy had forgotten that minor detail.

Malfoy snickered. "Yeah, apparently, according to some first years, it's this black dragon. But none of them could get any shots in." he almost sounded like he was insinuating a challenge.

Harry knew immediately to who they were referring to, only one dragon would be able to avoid spells, even cast from the most inexperienced wizard, in a small space like this one. From the stories he'd heard from Ron, Harry knew this dragon had to be Toothless.

"I doubt we'll be able to then." Ron noted, also coming to the same conclusion.

Malfoy smirked. "We'll see about that." And he turned on his heel and stalked off, somewhere that Harry really didn't care. He just was annoyed at how the pale Slytherin could act like he didn't care about anyone but himself. Well, he thought, he didn't.

"Do you think he's telling the truth?" Hermione asked curiously. Harry could see it in her eyes that she was worried, but she wasn't about to let it show.

Ron shrugged. "He's always making things up." He remarked.

Harry agreed and they left it as an open statement. They didn't really have an answer, only time would tell.

Soon enough, they had their answer. When the class began, Professor Moody limped to the front of the class and began his explanation on the following class. It came as a surprise to everyone, including Malfoy, from what Harry could tell.

"As a practical lesson, we'll be using spells on an active subject, who has been volunteered by a young man you may all know." Professor Moody started. He turned his head, and Harry was surprised to see the scrawny form of Hiccup against the stone walls of the courtyard. So Malfoy had been right, Harry mused.

"You'll all get the chance to practise defensive spells, only, on the dragon." the professor continued. Murmurs went around the class, which went along the lines of 'where's the dragon' because no one could see it yet. Harry doubted Hiccup could either, and he was the dragon's friend, or what have you. He still wasn't entirely sure what their relationship was.

Harry noticed Professor Moody give Hiccup a sharp look, to which made the one legged boy stand up straight and nod. A moment later, a large shadow fell over the courtyard, blocking the sun. Harry looked up, as did many of the other students, as the large black dragon swooped over the courtyard. As Harry had seen the dragon before, he noticed a couple of things. The dragon didn't have a saddle on, and the prosthetic tail which was usually a vibrant red, was instead a dull grey colour, clearly different and fully functional. Hiccup must have designed this one recently.

The large dragon came in for the landing, bounding in front of Hiccup and standing protectively in front of the short boy. Harry saw the surprised looks around the class, either that they were able to cast spells towards the dragon, or his reaction towards Hiccup, Harry wasn't entirely sure. Either way, he felt pleased that he knew the

dragon personally, rather than just glances.

Hiccup walked into the centre of the courtyard, to the front of the class. Toothless stalked close behind, watching Hiccup and the class simultaneously. Harry was impressed in the dragon's ability to multi task. Professor Moody seemed to scowl at Hiccup, before turning back to the class.

"Single line, please." The professor announced. There was a flurry of motion, and Harry and his friends were swept towards the back of the line, just behind Malfoy and his goons. They weren't unhappy, they didn't really want to have to aim their spells at a dragon which Hiccup was so clearly attached to.

The first person in line was a Slytherin, who was clearly itching to have a shot at Toothless. Hiccup moved out of the way, a small frown on his face, whilst Toothless prepared himself. The Slytherin seemed to take this as a challenge and prepared his wand.

It went on like that, Toothless defended himself quite perfectly, Harry barely seeing the dragon move he was that fast. Toothless made it look effortless, but a careful glance to the side from Harry's part confirmed that Toothless was working hard, the look on Hiccup's face saying it all.

Eventually, it came down to Malfoy's turn. Malfoy stepped to the front of the line, waiting and watching the lethal black dragon. Toothless breathed heavily with exhaustion, the first time he'd been able to stop moving. The other students had thought to act quickly, but Malfoy had clearly seen this tactic didn't work. He was prepared to attack with everything he had, and both Harry and Hiccup were worried. Hermione and Ron were watching anxiously behind Harry, waiting to see what would happen.

Toothless was analysing Malfoy carefully, watching with those large green eyes which screamed danger. Malfoy was poised to strike, the same emotions reflected on his face. It was the ultimate face off, Slytherin vs dragon. It was almost ironic, considering their house emblem was a snake.

Malfoy looked at Hiccup for a moment, a small smirk forming in his eyes. He lifted his wand and muttered a spell, the blast heading straight for the defenceless boy. Harry knew his strategy immediately, after seeing the way the large black beast leapt in front of Hiccup to defend him, taking the full brunt of the spell and landing further from Hiccup.

The plan was pretty smart, really. Malfoy knew Toothless would defend Hiccup no matter what, but still. Malfoy seemed pretty proud of himself as they watched curiously to see what would happen.

At first, there was no effect. Harry stayed tense, knowing the spell would have to have done something, considering how long Malfoy had been deliberating it.

After a moment, a bright light began to engulf the black beast. Malfoy smirked, the students all moved quickly to get a better look, and Hiccup dashed closer to the dragon. Toothless roared as the lights swallowed him, and Harry saw something he really wished he never would.

The dragon seemed to change shape, becoming more vertical. The silhouette of his body in the bright light showed what seemed to be a human, but that wasn't right.

As the light cleared, shocked gasps went around the entire courtyard, including their professor. Malfoy smirked, also surprised by with glee. Hiccup ran forwards, trying to gather what was going on. Harry just stared in shock, trying to comprehend what had just happened.

There, where the black Night Fury had once stood, was a tall, thin and pale boy, a pair of large black bat wings attached to his back and bright green eyes. His hair was jet black which made his skin stand out more. On his body, instead of the prosthetic tail, was a makeshift shirt and a pair of shorts, which was clearly made of the same material.

The boy brought his hands to his face in surprise, examining his fingers carefully. He turned his hands over in succession, as though they would suddenly disappear. His eyes held shock and fear as he looked up at Hiccup, who also held the same expression.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup stared at the boy, <em>Toothless</em>, in shock. His best friend was no longer the fastest dragon known to man, but a boy with a pair of jet black wings. Although there was a class behind him, Hiccup felt as though it was just the two of them. They were surrounded by their own bubble of shock, one which seemed to be lasting forever. Hiccup wished he could blink and his beloved dragon would return to normal, but no matter how hard he tried, such things never returned.

"H-Hiccup?" a stuttering, deep voice came out of the boy's mouth, which surprised everyone and broke the bubble around the two.

Hiccup grinned. "Well, there are plusses and minuses to this." He noted pleasantly, trying to contain the horror he was still experiencing in his chest.

Toothless smiled, and it was definitely better than when he was in his dragon form. "Guess we're not breaking records." His voice was scratchy, and it had a lot of Hiccup's accent in it, which made it known the dragon only knew what to say due to the number of times he'd heard Hiccup talk.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and walked closer, examining the thick wings Toothless still appeared to have. "Well, no. but you can on your own now." Somehow, the thought annoyed Hiccup. Toothless shook his head at this, everyone knew Toothless hated to fly without Hiccup. That was why this was such a predicament they'd gotten themselves into.

"Got any fish though?" Toothless asked suddenly, moving his hands to his side.

Hiccup laughed. "Guess it's better than head butting me until I do." He chuckled. They had seemingly forgotten the class behind them, and the class was just focussed on watching the dragon interact with the

boy as though he was a normal human. It was strange for everyone there.

Toothless grinned, a sly look in his eye. He walked forwards, bending down and rubbing his head against Hiccup's chest. The young Viking jumped back in surprise, earning a hearty chuckle from Toothless.  
"Apparently I still can. Just not the same."

"I'd rather you were a dragon." Hiccup said, a note of resentment.

Toothless smirked. He looked at his tall figure. "And pass up all this? Doesn't sound like you Hiccup."

The small boy blushed and looked away, saying something he shouldn't have in the presence of numerous people. Toothless laughed to himself and nodded.

"Yeah, it's weird. I prefer being a dragon too." He finally agreed.

They seemed to remember for the first time that they were in front of a large group of people. Hiccup looked to Malfoy, who was looking annoyingly smug, then to Professor Moody, who had a damn smirk on his face. Upon seeing Hiccup's eyes on him, Moody collected himself and walked forwards.

"Well, that was certainly an interesting turn of events. Sadly, we can't continue the lesson, we don't have a dragon." a chorus of murmurs went around the courtyard, Hiccup felt sure they were competing against each other, some glad and others not so for the abrupt end.

Moody turned to Hiccup, the stupid smug look returning in his eyes. "Could be interesting for you though." He added, low enough that the class wasn't able to hear it.

Hiccup frowned. He looked at Malfoy quickly, who was still wearing that annoying smirk. "How long until it wears off?" he asked, almost pleadingly. He wasn't sure how long he would last if the dragon stayed a boy.

Malfoy shrugged. "Well, the book said it could last up to a month... minimum a week... so you know, somewhere in between." Which didn't help at all, and Malfoy knew it.

Toothless glared at Malfoy. A distorted growl escaped his lips, which would have sounded more threatening if he were a dragon. Malfoy clearly wasn't afraid, he just stood there with his hands in his pocket. This made Toothless even angrier, preparing himself for a fight. He flared his wings and glared furiously, unable to do much else than crouch down low.

Hiccup stepped in between them then. Toothless immediately stood up straight, giving Hiccup the biggest doe eyes possible for a human. Hiccup almost smiled, but he needed to sort this out first. "Well, great. Thanks, Malfoy." He said sarcastically. "We'll just have to cope, it's not really the worst thing that's happened to us." Hiccup directed this more to Toothless than to the pale haired wizard.

Toothless nodded, turning his head to the large black wings on his back. "No need for the tail rod, or saddles now though."

Hiccup grinned. He walked forwards and pushed Toothless towards the edge of the courtyard, away from the prying eyes of the students. He wanted to be away from them, they had caused enough damage for one day.

They were able to escape the courtyard, heading up to the tower. Hiccup opened the door, Toothless not knowing how, and they walked into the room together. Immediately, all heads turned. Gobber, Astrid and Fishlegs were in the common room, their dragons behind them. Hiccup felt a small pang of jealousy run through his chest, but he remembered Toothless wasn't gone, just not a dragon.

"Where's Toothless?" Astrid asked curiously, not able to see the dark haired boy behind Hiccup's body.

Hiccup looked at the boy, a small smile in his eyes. "Um, well, see, we ran into some trouble... and now he's not really a dragon..." he explained carefully.

Everyone gasped as Toothless walked out from behind Hiccup, his wings carefully balanced against his back. He stood in front of Hiccup, just barely protecting him, but old habits die hard when you're a dragon.

Fishlegs had a shocked expression on his face, Gobber amazed and Astrid furious. "What happened?! I'll go kill whoever did this!" she exclaimed.

Hiccup shook his head, resting a hand on Toothless's shoulder as he seemed ready to fight the girl. "It's alright, it'll wear off eventually. Besides, now I'll have someone to talk to."

This infuriated Astrid further. "You had me before you know. And it's not alright. No one should have done anything to him, he's a Night Fury." She fumed.

Hiccup sighed, stepping closer to Astrid. He grabbed both her hands into his, clasping them in front of him. "I know that, Astrid. Malfoy was sneaky though, and Toothless was only protecting me." He paused, looking deeper into her blue eyes. "Besides, it's not like it's the worst thing, he's a human, not some distorted animal with no resemblance to anything we know of."

Astrid frowned, but nodded in resign. "Going to be interesting around here, that's for sure." She said after a moment, completely changing her tone.

Hiccup grinned. "Yeah, that's for sure. Now he'll be able to come to the great hall for dinner."

Astrid was about to say something when Toothless appeared at Hiccup's side, pressing his shoulder firmly onto Hiccup's, clearly claiming possession of the smaller boy. And he really was shorter, Toothless was at least half a head taller than Hiccup, which made almost no sense, considering how low to the ground the dragon actually was.

"Right here, you know." Toothless announced. He had a very deep voice, even in sarcasm and annoyance.

Hiccup smiled and looked at Toothless. "Well, at least you don't have to head butt me to get my attention."

Toothless formed a waked smirk on his face, sending a quick glance at Astrid, he rubbed his head under Hiccup's chin, looking into Hiccup's green eyes with his own blazing ones. Hiccup jumped away, crashing into Astrid, who had started to laugh.

"Still the same dragon, you know. Just different body." Toothless grinned. Hiccup mumbled under his breath in an unimpressed tone.

"For a dragon, you've got the speech thing down pat." Hiccup muttered, watching as Astrid sent amused smirks their way. Oh sure, thanks for the help.

Toothless grinned. "Helps that you talk an awful lot to me, about pretty much everything." He said suggestively.

Hiccup blushed, turning away from Astrid as she started to laugh harder. "That's because you're my best friend, and you can't really do much..." he trailed off, knowing the point was invalid.

Toothless just beamed. "Well, you never thought I'd become human." He agreed. He turned his head as he looked at his large black wings, a frown forming on his face. He looked around the common room, trying to find something, but Hiccup wasn't entirely sure what.

Before they could do anything, Snotlout and the twins walked into the room, completing the party. Whilst Fishlegs and Gobber hadn't said anything â€“ though they had listened â€“ Snotlout and the twins were bound to. As Hiccup had predicted, Snotlout's eyes landed on Toothless and he snickered.

"Who's the new boyfriend, Hiccup?" Snotlout asked, walking closer and admiring Toothless.

Hiccup watched as Tooth less's lips formed a small smirk, amusement in his eyes as he watched Hiccup reaction. The Viking glared at Toothless before turning to Snotlout. "Well, complications arouse... and this is Toothless."

The twins exchanged looks and pouted. "He's not fun anymore." Tuffnut grumbled, Ruffnut agreeing.

Toothless frowned, still agitated with the twins blatant disregard for his loyalty towards Hiccup. He was about to step forwards when Hiccup pulled a hand in front of him, easily restraining the stronger male.

"It won't last long and you'll have the Night Fury back." Hiccup assured the twins.

Ruffnut grinned. "Great."

"Who was the one who took away our dragon?" Tuffnut asked.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and glanced at a glaring Toothless. "Malfoy thought it would be a good idea. At least now Toothless can go with us on more trips."

Toothless nodded, turning back around to Hiccup. "I'll protect you with my life." He swore. Hiccup felt a pool of guilt riding up inside his stomach. He glanced away momentarily, looking at the floor and then to Astrid. She didn't seem to understand, so he reluctantly looked back to the humanised dragon.

A cough behind them made heads turn, everyone facing Fishlegs and Gobber. Fishlegs opened his mouth to speak, an air of superiority radiating off him. "This gives us the chance to figure out how to get away from the wizards." He said.

\_Gobber nodded. "Indeed it does," the old Viking said wisely. "Also very amusing for us when the wizards glimpse a human dragon."

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\_Hiccup grinned, looking to Toothless. "Malfoy probably told the whole school his version of the story." \_

\_We'll have to set them straight." Astrid said.\_

\_Toothless showed his teeth in a wide smile. "Yeah, I'm still dangerous as a human." \_

\_The twins perked up as he mentioned this, evil plans forming evidently in their eyes. Hiccup looked away, exasperated, at the stupidity levels shown by the twins. Somehow, though, both Ruffnut and Tuffnut were incredibly smart individuals. They just chose not to show it often. \_

\_Snotlout then broke off, seeming to find the conversation too boring for himself. He walked over to where Hookfang was perched, the stair well. The twins cackled to themselves and heading to Barf and Belch, Gobber left who knows where, and Fishlegs walked up to Hiccup, Astrid and Toothless.\_

\_What's the matter, Fishlegs?" Astrid asked.\_

\_Fishlegs looked at Toothless, disbelief still written in his eyes, but he pushed it down and turned to Hiccup. "Do either of you get the feeling that somethings off about this whole thing?" he asked wearily.\_

\_Hiccup nodded, glancing at Toothless first, who seemed to frown. "Yeah. I mean, how was Dumbledore supposed to know about the contract in the first place?" \_

\_Fishlegs' eyes brightened, knowing the answer. "I thought of that too, actually. I went searching and found that chief Haddock had been on good terms with the head master here. Turns out, that headmaster had left instructions to Dumbledore as well, but I have no idea what they were." \_

\_Hiccup frowned. "No good to us, they were probably just to get Dumbledore to get us to break it off. I'm sure Haddock knew what the headmaster was planning." \_

\_Fishlegs shook his head, his eyes frowning rather than his lips.  
"That, but I think there was something more." \_

\_ "There's no way he's ever going to tell us though." Astrid spat angrily, hatred for the current headmaster rising. \_

\_Hiccup couldn't agree more, whilst Fishlegs was nodding. "True. So we've just got to get out of here before Dumbledore decides we've got to do more for him." \_

\_Toothless looked as though he'd just remembered something, a horror-struck look forming on his serene face. "He wants us to sign a contract with him." He said quietly.\_

\_Hiccup, Fishlegs and Astrid were stunned into silence, staring at the tall winged boy near them. Hiccup was the first to snap out of it, shaking his head and looking out the window, his eyes glazing over in worry. "But we can't!" \_

\_Astrid snapped out of it after hearing Hiccup's voice. "Yeah, the only way to break the contract would be to break off contact from the wizarding world." She reminded them.\_

\_Toothless nodded. "Well, I overhead Dumbledore talking to Snape..." he was interrupted by Hiccup giving him a strong glare.\_

\_ "And when was this?" he demanded.\_

\_Toothless looked down, an apology in his eyes. "When you were eating with your friends a few weeks ago." He replied.\_

\_Hiccup sighed. "Well, can't say it's not important, but when I tell you to stay put, I generally mean it." \_

\_The winged boy cringed and whispered, "Sorry." \_

\_ "It's alright." He paused, letting it sink in for his best friend. "Now, what did you find out?" he asked.\_

\_Toothless grinned, looking up to the group. Fishlegs and Astrid had stayed silent during their conversation, however it was clear they would have told their dragons the same thing had they done what Toothless had. "Anyway, I was walking through the halls when I heard them talking. Naturally, with the way they were obviously trying to be stealthy, I walked to them and listened in. they were talking about you guys, which infuriated me. Dumbledore mentioned that once you broke the contract with the dark wizard, he'd force you into signing on with him. Only this time, we'd be against the dark wizards rather than the good ones." \_

\_Astrid looked at Toothless in surprise. "But we can't! The only way to break off the contract is to break off all contact with the wizarding world." She exclaimed. \_

\_Fishlegs hummed in agreement. "Unless there is another way, and Dumbledore already knows it?" he asked, more to himself than anyone else.\_

\_Hiccup frowned to himself. If that was the case, wouldn't he have

just told them in the first place? It would have saved everyone the trouble. But then again, it did seem as though the headmaster also really wanted to learn the secrets of training a dragon. And he'd known almost everything about the Vikings on Berk, who's to say there wasn't a spy working for him that would come back and force them to work for Dumbledore? \_

\_Everything had just gotten that much more complicated. If it was indeed that Dumbledore knew how to break off the contract, he wouldn't tell them until he got what he wanted. Hiccup knew this. The wizard was old, but he was a scheming pile of yak dung. He hated how, even though Hiccup and the rest of his friends all hated the wizard, Dumbledore still managed to have them wrapped around his small finger. Simply because he couldn't let the dragons die. \_

\_Hiccup looked up. "We've got to get out of this place." He said.\_

\_Fishlegs and Astrid both agreed, but their faces both held anguish and sadness. "How though? We can't up and leave, you know what they'll do to the dragons." Astrid reminded him.\_

\_Hiccup shrugged, a devious look in his eye. Toothless had the beginnings of a smirk forming on his face at his best friend, knowing what he was planning. "Well, I never said we'd leave them." \_

## 15. Chapter 15

\*\*First of all, to whomever reads this, I am uber sorry for not having this chapter up sooner. I can understand if anyone wants to throw monstrous nightmare saliva or hexes my way, it's understandable. I have not had my editor and chief look at this chapter yet so yes it sucks, but hey, it's a chapter. So please... just don't be too hateful towards it I tried. And yes, only two more chapters to go who's excited for the big final chapter? I know I am, it's a long road. \*\*

Everything was heating up for the Vikings. Whilst Toothless was the talk of the castle, Malfoy was a champion. He was the one who'd defeated the dragon, changed him into a being who wouldn't be able to wound them or threaten them. Harry was aggravated, because, whilst he hated Malfoy ordinarily, he was particularly mad with him for harming his new friends. It escalated, too, of course. Malfoy used it against him, as expected, and they were at war more so than any other time. His new badges had hit an all-time low, and IL numerous students were wearing them and laughing as he walked by.

Harry had thought he could handle it at the beginning, but bringing the Vikings into their fight was something new. Malfoy was irritating him and not even the thought of Toothless returning to a dragon within the month did anything to comfort him.

The school was constantly buzzing, settling when Harry went near, and picking up again when he disappeared. Fortunately, he knew they weren't always talking about him. His connection to the Vikings had the students hiding their conversations about them from him. He wasn't displeased, but it would have been nice to hear what they had to say.

Harry went to the library during his break, wanting to get some study done. He'd already eaten lunch and his two other friends were in the great hall talking it up with the Vikings. They were excited about talking to Toothless, who had already proven to be useful. He wasn't happy the first time he'd encountered Malfoy after his transformation, and the events had ended with a bloody nose on Malfoy's half.

As he sat down, something caught his eye. A large, thick brown leather book sat open on counter where teachers generally sat for downtime. Harry stood up, making sure no one was paying attention to him, before realising everyone was in the great hall for lunch anyway. Perhaps the librarian wasn't, but she was nowhere to be seen at present.

Harry flipped the book to the front page and tried to hide his surprise at the title. *Viking Contracts and Loop Holes*. Obviously whoever had been reading this knew about the contracts with the Vikings, and only a couple teachers Harry could think of did. So either their headmaster had been down here, Professor Moody or Professor Snape. The chances it was the headmaster were slim, Moody even slimmer, therefore he'd narrowed it down to Snape. It seemed like something the Slytherin potions teacher would do.

Before Harry could get past the title, the book was ripped from his hands. He looked up in surprise at the intruder, finding the librarian glaring scornfully down at Harry. She walked towards the forbidden book area, an area Harry was quite familiar with, and placed the book on a high shelf.

Harry wondered how they'd never been able to spot the book before, heck, the name was a dead giveaway, but as he watched, the book spine changed, claiming it was just a book of spells. Harry frowned, memorising its place and watching the librarian casually as he gathered his things. This lunch break was coming to a quick end.

The young wizard headed down the long corridors to the great hall, where he found several students leaving. They were all laughing and didn't seem to notice as Harry slipped through the doors to find his friends. He wasn't surprised at all to find a gathering around the Vikings, all staring in awe at Toothless and his rather large black wings. The dark dragon didn't seem pleased about it at all, and was trying to restrain himself.

Harry walked over to them quickly, placing himself between Toothless and Hermione. The students around didn't move, so Harry figured he'd have to tell them later. It was news, definitely, and something they needed to know. He just didn't want the students to figure out.

The crowd dispersed, creating a path for someone to walk through. Harry watched Malfoy saunter up to the Gryffindor table and announce his presence by slamming his hand down and smirking at Hiccup. Harry felt the resentment for his rival grow in his stomach, acid churning and burning.

"Got no one to protect you now, Hiccup. Whatever shall you do?" Malfoy sneered, enjoying taunting Hiccup. There was a clear challenge in his eyes and Harry watched Hiccup accept it.

Toothless scowled, a low growl developing in his throat and Hiccup raised his hand, standing up so he was eye to eye with Malfoy. "Just because he's in human form doesn't mean he's not strong. You forget we are Vikings, tough and indestructible beings who have survived seven generations of attacks on the village by dragons."

Malfoy tried hard to conceal his concern, but Harry could see it in his eyes. It wasn't that he thought the dragon would harm him, no. it was he thought Hiccup would hurt him. The very idea was amusing, to Harry, at least. "Like you could ever defend anything. Bet you tried to kill Toothless but befriended him because you were weak hearted."

"Weak hearted?" Hiccup asked. His tone implied a sense of sarcasm and humour, as though something funny had run through his head. Toothless rolled his eyes beside Hiccup and moved closer, seeming pleased with his rider's reaction.

"I would never have backed down from the challenge." Malfoy said, standing tall and proud.

Hiccup nodded, agreeing. Before he could say anything, however, Fishlegs jumped in. "How did you know we hunted dragons?"

Malfoy scoffed. "I was curious, so I read up about you. Did you end up destroying the nest?" he taunted, raising his snide mannerisms. Clearly he had no clue what was going on and was only doing what he thought was right. This wasn't it.

Hiccup grumbled next to Toothless and turned around. "For your information, Malfoy, it's classified information what we do and don't do on our own island with our own dragons. So unless you plan on becoming a Viking, I suggest you shut your trap before I feed you to the queen."

Malfoy didn't seem phased by the threat, clearly not understanding the full impact of the statement. Harry knew, quite well, it would be terrifying to meet a beast so powerful the ground shook under its feet as it moved.

"I'd make a better Viking than you lot put together." Malfoy said confidently.

Snotlout was the one to laugh. Hysterically. He just couldn't stop, rolling onto the floor. Everyone watched "Hermione, Ron, Harry, Hiccup, Astrid, the twins and Fishlegs" as the boy made fun of Malfoy eagerly. It was clear he found the comment highly amusing.

"You'd make the worst Viking Berk would ever see. You'd see one wood pile and run for the hills." Snotlout exclaimed, still rolling around on the floor.

Malfoy shrugged indifferently. "Doesn't that just tell you what you all are then?"

"That doesn't even make sense, Malfoy." Harry said, starting to get fed up with this. It was dragging on longer than usual and Harry just wanted to tell his friends the news.

Malfoy turned to Harry coldly. "This doesn't concern you."

Astrid glared at Malfoy coolly, her gaze like ice. It sent shivers down Harry's back, and he wasn't the one she was glaring at. "I suggest you turn around and leave, Malfoy, before you find out what my favourite weapon is." Harry got the sense it wasn't a dragon, either.

Malfoy blinked, terrified of the cold and emotionless voice Astrid pulled out, then found some strength and dignity to walk away, not another word leaving his mouth. Harry breathed a deep sigh of relief that he was gone, leaving his friends in peace. It really wasn't fair how he was treating the Vikings, they hadn't done anything to deserve this treatment. Anything other than being around Harry, and apparently that meant torturing them by Malfoy. Came with the territory. Gain friends, gain enemies.

Harry ushered the group outside, to the courtyard and onto the open grasses near the black lake. He stared at them, then made sure no one was around as he spoke in a quiet voice. "I've found something that might help us." He announced.

Instantly, there was a chorus of questions, namely about what and where. Harry tried to focus on one voice but that thought vanished quickly when Astrid shouted at everyone to shut up and let him explain.

"Thanks," he said quickly to Astrid, who nodded briefly at the wizard. "I was in the library before, and found a book which might have been helpful."

Fishlegs and Hermione both had a collective sigh. "We've been through every book in the library and nothing." Hermione said, her voice instantly deterred.

Harry agreed, they had been thorough. But they hadn't looked in the restricted section, nor did they know of its name changing properties. "That may be so, but I found a book open on the teachers table."

"Teachers read?" Tuffnut asked in surprise.

"Why read words when you can just kill the stuff words tell you stuff about?" Snotlout suggested, making a fist shape, swinging it through the air.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "We don't do that anymore, Snotlout. Besides, reading is good."

"For nerds." Ruffnut commented, aiding her brother and Snotlout.

Hiccup shook his head, a small smile on his face. Harry didn't understand how he could do it, but somehow, Hiccup seemed to like every one of the Viking members. He took the good with the bad, and Harry couldn't help but admire him and his persistence. He understood how he would make a great chief someday.

"Anyway, you were saying, Harry?" Hiccup prompted, turning everyone's eyes back onto Harry.

Harry swallowed quickly before finishing his story. "It was different, this book. The title was obviously something helpful, but when the librarian put it back the spine label changed. It was in the restricted section and my guess is the wizards don't want us to know they have it, otherwise they wouldn't have cast the confusing spell on the book." He explained.

"What was its title?" Hermione asked, curious. Everyone else looked stunned, and appreciative. They clearly thought this new book would be the answer to all their problems. Harry would like to think so, but he was fairly certain it wasn't all that. Just maybe a way off the contract and into another one, knowing the teachers and what Toothless had told them previously.

"Viking Contracts and Loop Holes," Harry replied.

Instantaneously there was a chorus of whoops and yells, everyone ecstatic about the news. Apparently the book would give everyone hope, and that was all they could ask for. Harry smiled as they tried to figure out how they would find it and get it, but they fell up short. Silence fell as everyone thought of ideas, and it was Ron who came up with the brilliant one.

"Harry." He said, startling everyone. Harry looked up, meeting his green eyes. "You're the one who knows where the book is. Go tonight, take the invisibility cloak and take the book."

Hermione nodded slowly, hearing the plan on her own ears. "It's incredibly risky, he could get caught."

"What's the worst that could happen? He's the boy who lived and a champion currently. The worst he could get is detention." Ron stated.

Hermione frowned, knowing Ron was right. She didn't like her friends breaking the rules though and felt very strong about it. Harry, on the other hand, thought the plan was brilliant and couldn't wait to enact it. Hiccup seemed surprised, not knowing what the invisibility cloak was, however a quick explanation had him grinning.

Harry watched his friend's converse for a while. It was nice being able to help them, give them hope. He would miss Hiccup and his gang, but it was for the best they return to where they belonged. Hiccup didn't belong here, and Harry knew he didn't enjoy it here. Much as Harry loved hanging around him, he knew it wouldn't last. He would just have to savour these last few moments with him.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup smiled thoughtfully, sitting back to back with Toothless near the fire. Toothless was facing the window, where Hiccup faced the door. He was drawing, sketching his best friend in human form. Much as he hated not having his best friend a dragon, it was nice for him to get some time with a human who he liked as much as his dragon best friend. Well, he was the same just with words and Hiccup appreciated that.</p>

Toothless himself was resting his eyes, his tongue clicking every few moments out of boredom. They'd already celebrated on the new hope of

the book, but neither were getting too excited. The twins and Snotlout were more than ready to go home, but Fishlegs knew there was something off about the way the book was just left in the library. Surely, had they wanted to keep it hidden, they wouldn't have left it on the work bench for anyone to see. Hiccup himself had been wondering that, but he wasn't about to tell the others they couldn't dream. He was dreaming himself, about being free of the wizards, back home with his father whom he sorely missed, above the cool ocean on the back of his dragon.

Astrid walked into the common room, her large nadda following closely behind. "I'm going to fly Grass Glow, do you want to help?" she asked.

Hiccup turned to Toothless, before he shrugged. "I might go down later and see Razor Neck. He hasn't seen Toothless in human form yet and I might take him alone."

"Right here, you know." Toothless mumbled, turning to look at Hiccup, his body turning causing Hiccup's to fall. Toothless easily stabilised him by catching him with his large wings, helping him stay upright.

Astrid nodded. "Good luck, I shall see you at dinner, yes?"

"Wouldn't miss it." Hiccup assured her. She breathed deeply and headed to the balcony, jumping gracefully onto her nadda. With one stroke they were in the air, gliding down towards the forbidden forest and leaving Hiccup and Toothless to themselves.

Toothless stood, helping Hiccup to his feet. The two young males walked to the balcony, observing the school. They weren't used to looking out to a stony castle, nor would they ever be, but they appreciated the sight of the forest. At least it wasn't all destroyed by construction.

"How are you feeling?" Hiccup asked, leaning against the balustrade to talk to Toothless. The dragon leant against the opposite railing, staring at Hiccup with his piercing green eyes.

Toothless shrugged, his wings flopping lazily to the ground. His short black hair moved easily in the breeze, his skin still a pale colour. Since his transformation, Hiccup had given Toothless some proper clothes, ones which fit him better and didn't look uncomfortable. Toothless had insisted he keep his old ones, but practicality won.

"I've had worse." Toothless said lazily, not caring much. Hiccup could only imagine the dragon shrugging and rolling his body away, much the same response as Hiccup had just received from the human. Though Hiccup knew Toothless was still the same, it was hard to put Toothless the Night Fury into the human body and still call them the same. For one, Toothless could now talk. He'd never been able to do that before.

"True that." Hiccup noted, watching as a single student dashed through the courtyard, obviously late.

Toothless smiled, revealing his sharp teeth. He'd lost the ability to

retract his teeth, something Hiccup wasn't unhappy about considering how strange it would be to see a human with no teeth.

Hiccup turned abruptly, heading for the large doors to the common room. Toothless watched in confusion as he opened the door and stepped outside, into the darkened stairwells. Hiccup turned briefly, motioning for Toothless to follow. The dragon boy quickly followed, waiting for Hiccup to close the door before following him down the stairwell.

They entered the main corridor, heading towards the library department. Hiccup didn't really know where he wanted to go, but he just wanted to escape their tower. Toothless wasn't in much condition for a flight, and he couldn't see Razor Neck yet, he was too lazy and wasn't about to face the keepers.

Toothless walked beside Hiccup, taking in the sights and smells. They passed two young hufflepuff girls, who blushed as Hiccup walked passed, giggling when they thought they were out of range. Hiccup chuckled to himself and Toothless seemed very confused, but also slightly amused.

They made their way to the library entrance, finding a very familiar figure sitting at one of the tables. Although Hiccup and Neville had never really had a conversation together, it was safe to say Hiccup did know him. Toothless watched, not having a clue who Hiccup was staring at, before entering behind Hiccup to the library.

Hiccup made his way over to Neville, sitting down beside him. He noticed the librarian was nowhere to be found, so he allowed himself a conversation.

"Hey, Neville."

The wizard looked up in surprise at his name, apparently he was completely wrapped in his botany book he hadn't heard Hiccup enter. He greeted Hiccup, confusion settling in his eyes. "What are you two doing here?" he included Toothless, out of politeness Hiccup gathered. He clearly wasn't looking at the taller dragon boy.

Hiccup shrugged, relaxing in the chair. Toothless wandered off, looking through the bookshelves for anything entertaining. "Not much. The others are busy so I thought I'd come chill in the library for a while." Hiccup replied easily.

Neville nodded, looking briefly at his book, before back at Hiccup. With some sort of forlorn sigh, he closed the book and focussed his attention solely on Hiccup. The Viking felt a pleased sensation flow through him, considering himself above the book. Well, something like that anyway.

"It's a good place to think." Neville agreed.

Hiccup smiled. "Filled with the smell of old books."

"You sound like Hermione." Neville noted.

"Is that a bad thing?" Hiccup asked, a genuine question.

Neville laughed, shaking his head. "She's a genius. It's a wonder how

she manages to get her homework done and still have time to muck around with her friends. Not that Harry and Ron aren't awesome friends." He quickly amended.

"They are pretty cool." Hiccup agreed. "But I don't know many other people here." He said, almost sounding as though he wished he did. In truth, he didn't. He was quite happy not knowing many people. Less goodbyes, less attachments when he would have to leave. Because, inevitably, they would leave, and they'd leave all their friends behind. Hiccup would miss Harry, Ron and Hermione, they were the only wizards who had been nice to them for the duration of their stay. But he wouldn't miss the place. Definitely not. They could always visit them in the Archipelago anyway.

The wizard looked at his book briefly, before his eyes flicked around the library. "Now's probably not the best time for it, really." He admitted.

Hiccup looked at him sceptically, and Neville got the message, preparing to explain.

"Just with everything with Malfoy, I don't think people would be too thrilled to talk to you guys."

Hiccup looked to Toothless for a moment, before a small smile placed on his lips. "Makes our lives easier, I guess."

Neville paused, allowing the answer to sink in. Clearly, he wasn't aware of their current predicament. The less people who knew, the better really. It was safer that way. Hiccup didn't want the news spreading to Malfoy that would be the last thing they needed.

"Are you alright with Malfoy's commentary?" Neville asked randomly, after Hiccup and Toothless had relaxed partially.

Hiccup looked up, his bright green eyes watching Neville's own. "He doesn't know what he's talking about half the time, so it's almost a laugh if he wasn't so irritating. Besides, even I could take him on."

Neville gave him a look of disbelief. "But you're so..." he trailed off, Hiccup knowing what he was implying of course.

"Small?" he finished. He then nodded, looking at Toothless briefly. "I get that a lot, it's alright." He allowed. He didn't like being called small, he was a Viking, but he knew it was true. Compared to Fishlegs, Snotlout and even Astrid, he was a twig. But he was the twig who had single headedly taken down a night fury and proceeded to befriend said dragon.

"Believe it or not, I can hold my own in a fight. Especially if it was between one of you wizards, hand to hand." Hiccup finished.

Toothless grinned. "Maybe not with magic."

Hiccup turned to the dragon with a chuckle. "Is that a challenge?" the young Viking asked.

"Did it sound that way?" Toothless asked, his taunting voice growing

as the challenge grew.

Neville held his hands out in an attempt to break up their growing battle.

Hiccup completely ignored the wizard, his green eyes staring straight into Toothless' own. "There's really only one way to settle this." The Viking announced.

Neville put his head in his hands, knowing it wasn't going to end well. He refrained from saying anything, though neither boys noticed it.

Toothless grinned, reaching his green eyes. "We just have to find an unsuspecting wizard for you to fight and maybe you'll stand a chance."

"Give me some credit, I could fight off multiple wizards here, one at a time of course." Hiccup announced.

"Viktor Krum?" the dragon asked, giving Hiccup a pointed look. Hiccup knew he'd lost this one, but he still kept his point. He could beat at least a couple of the wizards, if he wasn't able to do that, he wasn't fit to be the chief's son.

Hiccup stood up. "It's been great, Neville, but I believe I have a point to make to this beast." He glared at Toothless for a moment, before turning and leaving the wizard. The dragon obediently followed Hiccup out of the library and straight to the courtyard.

Once there, Hiccup sat at a bench and sighed. "Well, that went swimmingly."

Toothless chuckled. "Still up for the fight?" he asked, still holding the taunt in his voice.

Hiccup shook his head. "I don't think it's a good idea. If there were any wizards who were gutsy enough to fight, they'd probably be expelled, and, much as I don't like them, that's probably not the best idea." He explained.

Toothless laughed, his chest vibrating at the sound. Neither were completely used to the dragon's new antics, but they were slowly adjusting. "Doesn't bother me."

"Of course it doesn't, you useless reptile."

The dragon in question placed a hand over his heart and faked a wounded expression. "Your words hurt like arrows." He said dramatically.

Hiccup grinned. "That's the point."

"You're so punny." Toothless deadpanned, giving him the classic 'are you serious' look the dragon was famous for. Hiccup could recognise it anywhere, and it suited the boy just as it did the dragon.

Hiccup faced the exit to the court yard and started walking, eyes straight at the forbidden forest. The dragon didn't need to ask to know where the Viking was going. He followed behind, before hopping

beside Hiccup as they made their way towards the dragons.

Once they arrived, Hiccup wasn't surprised to find Astrid still playing with Grass Glow. The twins had apparently taken Fire Starter out for a fly, and Fishlegs had gone with them leaving Moon Finger to her lonesome here. Hiccup found Razor Neck exactly where they'd left him previously, alone in his cage. The dragon snorted upon Hiccup's arrival and beckoned them over with a squawk.

Hiccup wandered casually to the dangerous dragon and called to him. Razor Neck stood proud in the cage, apparently not having seen Toothless behind Hiccup. Once Toothless made his own way over, the large dragon breathed in deeply, confused by the scents.

Toothless let out a familiar growl, his chest rumbling. The larger dragon immediately recognised the Night Fury and clicked to Hiccup, who moved to where his dinner basket lay. He proceeded to then pass through a few fish and the dragon happily swallowed them whole.

Hiccup was too focussed on the dragon to notice one of the keepers walking up behind him. He was directly behind Hiccup when Toothless alerted him of his presence, making Hiccup spin. Razor Neck, who had finished his fish, watched the keeper warily. Clearly he was protective of Hiccup too, but Toothless still managed to take the bat.

"So the rumours are true, then." Charlie said, looking with an impressed eye at Toothless.

Hiccup stood tall and proud, not backing down as he faced the wizard. Toothless sidled closer to Hiccup, wings coming up behind him in a protective gesture. Hiccup knew it wouldn't take much for the dragon to attack the wizard, and it was this that kept him standing tall.

"He is still a dragon and can still kick your butt." Hiccup stated clearly.

Toothless made a snort of agreement before briefly turning his head to look at Razor Neck behind him. Hiccup saw the two, a moment of connection between them.

Charlie paused momentarily, unsure of whether he should proceed or not. "I just came here to tell you that we are getting a bunch of new dragons in for the final task, and it's the same idea as for the first and second for Harry Potter."

Hiccup frowned, looking at Charlie. "Why does this kid get more help than any of the others? It's called cheating and I don't want to have any part of that."

"It's not cheating, they are still going to be wild dragons. We just don't want to harm Harry." Charlie said quickly. Clearly their morals were mixed up, thinking it was a good idea to bring dragons in and not expect someone to get hurt. These wizards were not the brightest of beings.

"What makes him so special?" Hiccup demanded, setting off a growl from both Toothless and Razor Neck, who glared fiercely at the

wizard.

Charlie took a step back, but otherwise planted his feet against Hiccup. "You don't know enough of our world to understand, but Harry is an important character in destroying a very bad person."

The Viking turned away, facing Razor Neck entirely as his words turned icy. "We will help train your dragons, I cannot promise we will stick around for long after the task."

"Have you been granted permission to leave?" the wizard asked, obviously believing himself to have caught Hiccup.

The Viking had a sour smile on his face, turning his head in a small movement to look at the wizard. "You have no say on what we do and do not do, when we leave, which we will do, be warned."

Charlie seemed visibly shaken by Hiccup's tone, not believing that the small Viking could construct such a forceful voice. Clearly he had underestimated the Vikings stubbornness, it was a force to be reckoned with.

Hiccup turned away from Charlie and put his hand through the cage for Razor Neck, who wasted no time meeting the hand with his nose. Hiccup grinned at the dragon and looked to Charlie, regretting it for a moment, before requesting the materials he needed for a flight.

Toothless growled at Hiccup, completely forgetting for a moment that he could use words, before he stopped Hiccup completely with a hand on his shoulder. "There is no way you're going flying on that dragon. Not when I'm in this form."

Hiccup turned to his best friend, taking the hand off his shoulder. "Toothless, come on. I have to fly him sometime, and with you in this form, it's the only way. Besides, I'll have you flying beside me the entire time."

Toothless grumbled to himself, unhappy but unwilling to argue. The large dragon seemed to understand what was happening and clicked happily in his cage. When Charlie returned with the materials, disappearing quickly, Hiccup wasted no time opening the cage and allowing the Horntail to step out.

Razor Neck walked cautiously out, stepping onto the grass carefully as though one wrong step and Toothless would claw him to death. Hiccup halted the dragon and ran a hand along his wing gently. The dragon watched Hiccup's every move, unsure of what he was doing. Hiccup reached as high as he could, trying to touch the dragon's back, but he just wasn't used to riding tall dragons. Even a nadda was too tall for him.

Instead, Hiccup gently climbed up his spiked leg and sat carefully on his back. The Horntail met his eye, watching warily as the Viking sat on his scales. He didn't seem to mind, this wasn't the first time he'd had a rider on him, Hiccup just didn't want to overwhelm the dragon and make him freak out.

When Razor Neck showed no signs of panicking, Hiccup clicked the dragon into the sky. Hiccup remembered the rope quickly, calling for

Toothless to pass it to him. Hiccup quickly wound it around the thick neck of the Horntail before they shot into the sky above the forest. Toothless flew beside them the entire time, Hiccup holding onto the rope carefully.

Hiccup was unprepared for the raw power he felt while astride the mighty beast. Yes, Toothless was ultimately more powerful and faster, but it was clear Razor Neck was physically stronger, and he was larger. His powerful wings beat rhythmically as they moved through the sky.

The trio flew higher than they had before, amongst the clouds and Hiccup allowed the dragon to move as fast as he wanted, wherever he wanted " within a certain boundary of course. Toothless followed easily, his wings effortlessly keeping his body aloft in the sky.

Hiccup grinned, allowing himself to be lost in the feel of flying. Whilst flying Toothless was the best thing in his life, flying Razor Neck certainly came a close second. Hiccup didn't even care whilst he was there, sitting daintily on the enormous beast, forgetting the real reason the Vikings were there. He was allowed to forget, because once he landed, Harry was going to help them get out of this place. And Hiccup found comfort in his secret plan, he was going to take the dragons with him.

\* \* \*

><p>Harry found his invisibility cloak and stuffed it inside his school cloak. Ron and Hermione were waiting for him at the exit to the Gryffindor common room, talking amongst themselves. Harry joined them once he was sure the cloak was safely tucked away, moving down to the great hall for dinner.</p>

Upon arriving, Harry got a glimpse of Fleur Delacour and Viktor Krum communicating, before they dispersed to their own table. Harry waved to Cedric, who also greeted Harry from his place at the Hufflepuff table. Between the excitement of the Viking's visit and their current predicament, Harry had barely gotten a chance to talk with the other champions. The most he'd gotten was with Cedric, alerting him to the dragons and him the egg.

Harry sat beside Hiccup, much as he'd done for the past few weeks. The Vikings were all chatting excitedly, and Harry was able to catch 'Fire Starter' and 'blew up' amongst the conversation. His mind processed that Fire Starter was the twins dragon, and they did love blowing things up so it made some sense.

Hermione looked at Harry, dragging his thoughts from the Vikings. "Have you finished the paper for potions?" she asked.

Harry gave her a blank look. "We got that today."

Hermione nodded. "Well, we did have that break between class and dinner, I always do the homework then. You guys are going to fall behind soon."

Ron was pretty adamant he wasn't going to fall behind, telling her he still had three days before it was due. At this, Hermione grew persistent. "You guys are always up ridiculously late the night

before a paper is due! Wouldn't it be nice to have a break and actually sleep? She asked.

Harry considered her words. "That's would be nice, but, Hermione, neither of us are determined enough to actually do it the day we get it. It's called procrastinating. You should try it sometime."

"I have, and you shouldn't take this year so lightly. We're coming up to our OWLs and Harry, you need to get some good marks to become a good aura." Hermione said, although her tone was a lot more resined than it was before. Clearly she was giving in to the boys and their ridiculous attitude towards school.

Harry laughed. "OWLs aren't till next year, Hermione. Besides, we have bigger things to worry about."

"Yeah, did you forget we're trying to get the Vikings out of here?" Ron put in, finally contributing to the conversation.

Hermione rolled her eyes easily. "We don't have to worry about that one till tomorrow, once Harry has our book."

Both Harry and Ron gave her pointed looks. She seriously had some messed up priorities. The Vikings were possibly more important than most of what was going on, aside the triwizard tournament, because they may or may not be the destruction of Hogwarts itself. If they couldn't figure out how to break off this deal, Hiccup and his fellow Vikings would be forced to kill the wizards. Harry was not ok with that, and he was sure Hiccup wasn't either.

The meals finished quickly and soon they were ushered back to the common room. Harry snuck to the bathroom, saying something about meeting them back in the common room. Both his friends knew what he was truly doing, and as they departed, Harry rolled out the invisibility cloak. He sat in one of the stalls as he waited for the sound of footsteps to quieten down outside.

Harry wasn't a complete fool either. He waited for someone else to enter the bathroom before slipping out under the cloak. He knew a random door opening would cause suspicion and that wasn't something they could afford. He silently made his way towards the library, moving out of the way of oncoming students. There weren't many people still out, only those who wanted some last minute catching up with their friends from other houses.

Once at the library, Harry looked for the librarian before slipping into the restricted section. The library was closed now anyway, no students in there and it wasn't a surprise there weren't any teachers there either. Harry found the book, the same cover it had when he'd left it, and picked it off the shelf. He hid it quickly under his cloak before hurrying back to the dormitory.

Harry was beginning to think this thieving night was going too quickly, too well, when he rounded a corner and heard voices. With a start, he saw them blocking the stairwell to the Gryffindor common room. Harry recognised Professor Moody talking to Hiccup angrily about something. From what Harry could hear, it was about something Hiccup had said to Charlie, Ron's older brother.

Hiccup got extremely defensive, and Harry half wondered where

Toothless was. He wasn't left clueless for long when he heard the tell-tale growl coming from the stairwell. Professor Moody didn't seem alarmed at all by the human dragon, giving them both a glare with that prosthetic eye he had.

Harry was having trouble hearing them, but he knew they were talking about the dragons. From the way Hiccup got so defensive, it wasn't great. Toothless ended up making a very loud, very possessive snarl, as Moody reached to grab Hiccup. The professor thought better of it and backed away. His eye was cold and stony as he gave Hiccup one last look, before he turned and walked down the hall way back to his own room, or wherever it was teachers went at night.

The invisible wizard breathed a deep sigh of relief and headed for the stairs, seeing a very dejected looking Hiccup. Harry knew he shouldn't risk it, but he had to ask Hiccup if he was alright. He didn't bother taking off the cloak, instead just opting for telling him he was there. Toothless got a start and growled, but Hiccup was quick to reassure the dragon.

"Did you get the book, Harry?" Hiccup asked, his voice extremely quiet so as not to attract attention, though there was no one around.

Harry nodded, but realised Hiccup couldn't actually see him, so instead replied, "I got it, we're going to look at it tomorrow morning. But I don't know where." Harry explained.

Hiccup briefly looked up the dark stair well and back to the place he knew Harry was. "We could do it in our common room before breakfast." He suggested.

Harry agreed quickly, before remembering the conversation Hiccup had had with the professor. "What was Moody doing here anyway?"

Hiccup shrugged him off, his hand brushing him off. "Don't worry about him, he just wants us to keep our dragons here to help the fight blah blah blah." Hiccup said. Even though he said it so casually, Harry knew deep down he was annoyed and angered by this. Toothless growled lowly at hearing Hiccup say this, even though he'd heard the conversation, and Hiccup just halted him with his hand.

"That's intense." Harry said, trying to think of a way to help him. He couldn't think of anything, he didn't exactly know what it was like to have a dragon for a best friend, to live on an island roaming with them, or be stuck here with the looming, very real fear he might have to kill some of his friends.

Hiccup nodded, looking at his feet. Well, foot and prosthetic really. But Harry wasn't judging, because Hiccup never minded his leg and he knew there was a great story to go along with it, better than the one of Toothless' own prosthetic.

Harry looked at the stairs with a forlorn sigh. "I suppose I should get back to my dorm before Filch decides I'm missing."

Hiccup stepped up the next step, his metal leg clicking on the cold stone stairs. "I can walk you back up, considering they're so close to each other."

Harry grinned, even though Hiccup couldn't see him, and they walked side by side up the stairs. There was no conversation, both too tired for that, but it was a nice silence. The silence where they were both listening to the consistent click of his prosthetic leg on the stone.

Once they reached the entrance to the Gryffindor rooms, Harry bid Hiccup a good night. The Viking gave him a pleasant wave before walking further up the stairs, the click of his foot getting quieter and quieter until he couldn't hear it anymore. Harry smiled to himself, before he made his way to his room to hide the book and get ready for bed.

End  
file.